ABSTRACT

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KEY INFLUENCERS AS MOTIVATORS TO ATTENDANCE, BEHAVIOR, ENGAGEMENT, AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS IN METROPOLITAN ATLANTA GEORGIA

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This study examines middle school students' perceptions of the relationship between key influencers on student attendance, student behavior, student engagement, and academic achievement. Three hundred survey participants were used in this mixed methods design, which consisted of an analysis of the independent variables affecting overall student motivation operationalized as Student Attendance, Student Behavior, Student Engagement, and Academic Achievement of eighth grade students. The survey participants were composed of two urban middle schools in a large public school system and a private middle school in the same county. African-American male students were isolated to analyze correlation relationships among variables. Findings of the study indicated that among other outcomes, African-American male students have definite perspectives about teacher quality and the impact of parental involvement.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For many years, researchers have known that factors other than ability influence whether children seek or avoid challenges, persist or withdraw in the face of difficulty, and use and develop their skills effectively. However, the components and bases of adaptive motivational patterns have been poorly understood. As a result, common sense analyses have been limited and have not provided a basis for effective practices (Dweck, 1986). As it relates to African-American males, the previously cited factors effectively become of paramount importance, especially when according to the Snyder and Dillow (2011), about 3,252,000 high school students were expected to graduate during the school year, including about 2,937,000 public school graduates and 315,000 private school graduates. Yet, during the same year, some 19% of African-American youth between the ages of 16 and 24 across the country were neither enrolled in school nor working.

Institutions at all levels, academic and criminal, have been inundated with the question, "do you have a solution that will help us with our son's?" The concern for the academic and social well-being of all of our sons is important, and the academic and social wellbeing of all of our sons is surely of no greater importance than in African-American communities and urban middle schools across the country. Why is this so? This is so because there is a mounting challenge to give a relevant, quality education to all students, while addressing the barriers that prevent African-American males from

committing, engaging and achieving at acceptable levels academically before they feel the need to dropout. This is especially true for African-American males in urban areas due to some of the environmental barriers they face before they enter the school's doors. There are considerable problems facing the family, community, and nation. One really does not know where to begin to address the multitude of circumstances and misfortunes within our collective lives. On a daily basis, our community faces a wide array of problems—poor housing, inadequate school systems, crime, violence, drugs, lack of health care, unemployment, underemployment, and family disengagement. Many organizations and civic groups are quick to render their perspectives on how and what to do about the crisis of young black boys here in America. The Muslims say the solution is separation; the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) says the solution is voting power; the Urban League says the solution is educational programs; the government's answer to the crisis is to lock them up and throw away the key. Even many of our churches attempt to address the problem by constantly offering different kinds of programs (Sims, 2004).

In 2004, the actor/comedian/philanthropist, Bill Cosby, shocked an audience filled with African-American parents, dignitaries, civil rights leaders with remarks regarding the emotional instability in African-American males due to their lack of parenting, proclivities toward activities of self-hate, systemic interactive verbal abuse, and a tendency towards black-on-black violence. Cosby was speaking at an NAACP function commemorating the 50th anniversary of Brown vs. Board of Education. Some of the

African-American community leaders in attendance were outraged and called for a public apology, which Cosby never gave (William, 2006).

Some felt that Cosby overlooked the prevailing effects of political policies, which were seemingly having a negative impact on the African-American educational landscape. According to Styron and Nyman (2008) one such policy, the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, signed by then President George W. Bush began a new era of educational accountability on January 8, 2002, which some believe started a new era of chaos.

According to Styron and Nyman (2008), this reform legislation called for a new focus on school accountability for academic achievement of all students. The intent of the law was to ensure that all students, regardless of race, disability, or socioeconomic background, received a high-quality education. McMillian (2003) stated that teachers, administrators, and other educational professionals in the United States had been under pressure from the federal government for some time to eliminate the African-American/ European-American achievement gap. Under the new No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), however, teachers' and administrators' rewards and sanctions were tied to the annual progress of schools toward eliminating the achievement gap by 2014. According to McMillian, before No Child Left Behind, teachers and other education professionals in some states could be rewarded for general progress. For example, education professionals in North Carolina, under the ABCs accountability program before No Child Left Behind, could be rewarded for overall student performance, even if the achievement gap between African-American/European-American students did not decline. However,

after No Child Left Behind, education professionals had to ensure that all students succeed.

According to Sims (2004), when referring to the African-American males in the communities at large, we all have sons, nephews, brothers, and relationships to other boys in the neighborhood. We know that 70% of homes are without the presence of a father on a regular basis; 20% of the children live with another caregiver. Yet, we kiss the problem off. Where did we go wrong? How did we get this way? How did we end up like this? Is there any hope for these young, robust, intelligent, and talented young black boys—so many of whom, if projections are correct, will end up incarcerated, dead, on drugs, or disengaged from their families? Is there any hope for this future generation? Is there any hope for their becoming socially, economically, and educationally empowered? Again, I ask you, how can black boys be saved in America (Sims, 2004)?

According to William (2006), a very significant part of Bill Cosby's treatise was the concern that current social ills, many self-inflicted, were contributing to the lack of motivation in male youth towards education. The delinquency of parents, which was affecting the delinquency of their children, was ultimately affecting serious academic engagement and the hope of academic success.

But, according to Simons-Morton and Crump (2003), one of the reasons why parents are less involved in their children's academic lives, especially during middle school, is possibly because most middle schools are relatively large and located at some distance from the neighborhoods they serve. So parents, especially the ones already not involved in their children's academic lives, will have limited opportunities to talk with

teachers about their children's overall school adjustment, engagement, performance, and behavior at school.

African-American students have made substantial progress over the last 30 years; however, there is room for improvement, especially among African-American males. To solve the underachievement problem of African Americans, more attention must be paid to the African-American male population. Why, especially for this population, is important to understand when underachieving males affect the community as a whole (McMillian, 2003).

In an academic environment, Kommer (2006) stated that there appears to be a real difference between boys and girls. Kommer expresses that the process to educate boys is complicated and challenging for middle school students because of their gender. Kommer posed the following gender questions about education and boys in general:

1. Who is more likely to drop out of school?
2. Who is more likely to be sent to the principal's office for a disciplinary referral?
3. Who is more likely to be suspended or expelled?
4. Who is more likely to be identified as a student needing special education?
5. Who is more likely to need reading intervention? (p. 248)

According to Taylor and Lorimer (2003), the answer to all of the above questions is "boys." The researcher would like to go a little further and say that in an urban middle school setting the answer is more likely to be African-American boys. What is making matters worse is that student achievement during the middle to high school transition

period has declined. A positive is that most middle school and high school educational leaders are eager to find a remedy or at least develop a plan that will help students successfully get through this challenging stage of their education (McIntosh & White, 2006).

This state of academic affairs cannot be overlooked because according to Radcliffe and Stephens (2008), many of our nation's adolescents, particularly those who are underserved or at risk for school failure, may not be adequately prepared for postsecondary education and workforce success unless schools, parents, and stakeholders commit to creating a culture that promotes college or other postsecondary education. Literally, there must be a commitment from African-American students, especially males, beginning at an early age and visibly budding in middle school towards the rigors of academic learning and success.

Statement of the Problem

According to the Schott Foundation (2010), African-American males in urban middle schools in America, in a time when there are those calling for a dismantling of public education as we know, public education to be in America, are putting on the shoulders of educational administrators and instructors alike, heavy burdens. The additional task of educating African-American students, that face an innumerable amount of environmental and personal barriers will either detour them or define them in the process of achieving their academic and life's goals.

According to the Schott Foundation (2010), between 2001 and 2002 59% of African-American males did not receive diplomas with their cohort while two other

states, South Dakota and Maine, graduated less than 30% of their small number of black male students on schedule and 13 other states, including South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida graduated only between 30% and 40% with their peer group. Although much of the problem is concentrated in a few large cities such as New York City and Chicago, enrolling nearly 10% of the nation's black male students between them, these two cities fail to graduate 70% of those with their peers. In addition, school districts in which black students are concentrated do worse on the National Assessment of Educational Progress suspend and expel more black boys than others and assign more black boys to special education (Schott Foundation, 2010).

The researcher proposes to determine the extent to which key influencers impact motivation in African-American male middle school students to participate in the course of normal daily academic activity through the students' perceptions of their school climate, teacher-student relationship, instructional delivery, parent-student relationship and peer-student relationship. There are four indicators selected for their value as descriptive data related to student motivation: student attendance, student behavior, student engagement, and student academic achievement.

Background of the Problem

The problem identified is many African-American males in school are not demonstrating levels of motivation that lead to academic achievement. A great deal of statistics underscores the severity and persistence of the academic underachievement of many African-American males. Consider the National Center for Education Statistics data over the past decade, which reveals that a majority of African-American males in

grades 4, 8, and 12 did not reach grade level proficiency in key subject areas such as reading, mathematics, history, and science. In addition, less than one-quarter of African-American males were at or above grade level in these same subject matter areas. Furthermore, fewer than 3% of African-American males performed at advanced levels in these areas, which would make them eligible for Gifted and Talented or Advanced Placement courses, which are important gatekeepers for postsecondary education (National Center for Education Statistics, 2000; Howard, 2008).

In 1933, Dr. Carter G. Woodson proclaimed, "When a boy comes to school without knowing his lesson he should be studied instead of punished. As a rule, such children are not responsible for their failures. Their parents and their social status account mainly for these shortcomings" (p. 145). More than 75 years later, black America faces a situation in education where less than half of black males who start high school graduate within four years, and students in low-income, urban schools only have a 50% chance of having a qualified math or science teacher. This article introduces the special issue on black male achievement, sponsored by the Open Society Institute Campaign for Black Male Achievement and the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, by discussing trends in academic achievement among black males, reviewing relevant literature, and discussing civic initiatives to improve education for black males (Toldson, Brown, & Sutton, 2009).

According to O'Connor (2000), Ann Arnett Ferguson, in her book *Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity*, reminds us that the black male is subjected to failure in and out of school. O'Connor stated that we are bombarded by

statistics that illustrate the poor performance of black males on academic achievement measures, their underrepresentation in programs for the gifted and talented, and their overrepresentation in special education classes. Not to be excluded from the repertoire of black male ills also is that they are not only the most likely to be categorized as emotionally or behaviorally disabled but also are disproportionately represented on the disciplinary rolls in almost every school in America.

According to O'Connor (2000), for black males the probability of dropping out of secondary school is high, and their chances of going to college are low and subsequently the overrepresentation of black males among those who are unemployed, those who engage in criminal activity, and, moreover, those who eventually end up in jail is high. The underachievement, lack of inclusion, and backward progression of African-American men within American society, and particularly within the educational arena, has once again surfaced as a trend that demands immediate attention. However, the challenges of reversing the negative circumstances facing African-American men requires transforming abroad array of social, political, economic, psychological, and educational issues that are deeply rooted in the very power structure of America (Jenkins, 2006).

According to Toldson, Brown, and Sutton (2009), in 2007, as Senior Research Analyst of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Dr. Ivory A. Toldson began analyzing four national databases, and in 2008, completed *Breaking Barriers: Plotting the Path to Academic Success for School-age African-American Males*. Among the databases used to analyze educational trends among black males were The Decennial Census from 1940-2000 and the American Community Survey from 2001-2007. The

study showed that in 1940, only 6.7% of black men in the United States had a high school diploma compared to 25% of white males, and that the gap between black and white males was largest in 1950, when the percentage of white males with high school diplomas doubled. The study further revealed that black males continued to close the gap, until 1990, where since, black males have remained about ten percentage points behind white males.

According to Jenkins (2006), during the 1990s, the winds of change showing up as generational trends of drug abuse began to blow through some of the larger urban African-American communities across the country claiming African-American families with debilitating effects on the education process of the whole community, but especially black males. Jenkins uses The Hughes Brother's film Menace II Society (Hughes & Hughes, 1994) as a commentary on the generational change that occurred in the African-American community in the few short years following the Civil Rights era. Although Menace II Society was not typical of the lives of most African Americans, Menace II Society did show in a most realistic way, the results of a young black man, born to parents influenced by drugs, being raised by morally solid, but under-educated grandparents. His grandparents, although committed to him, were disconnected from the culture of addiction and crime overtaking their community and damaging their sensitivities.

According to Jenkins (2006), the introduction of drugs into the African-American community, in the late 1970s, served to tranquilize an already socially numb community. The devastation facing this fictitious family because of the introduction of drugs being all

too real to those being wiped out by drugs along with whole communities as well as the dreams of a better education, better opportunities and better lives that came with the Civil Rights era. The devastation is still being felt and is showing up as a kind of disengagement with some of the basic processes of education.

Kobus, Maxwell, and Provo (2008) stated that teachers feel that a lack of motivation impedes a student's learning process which contributes to the student's inability to be successful. Evidence of this is demonstrated in the classroom through inadequate homework completion, lack of focus during classroom activities, and low achievement on assessments.

For black males and the African-American community, the presence of educational barriers is not new, yet these barriers still present a proverbial mountain to be moved. Bill Cosby expressed concern that there must be a change in how African Americans look at opportunities for getting a good education in line with a change in family values that find value in education (William, 2006). There are those who dispute that the change or "collapse" in the African-American family has had an impact on all family values. These new values include but certainly are not limited to the lack of observance of religious assembly, the absence of fathers in the home, the presence of two and three stepfathers, teenage parents, the absence of grandmother and grandfather as the extended family offering sound counsel, financial support and patriarchal or matriarchal guidance. The educational collapse of the African-American family structure can be clearly seen in truancy issues, graduation rates, dropouts, and in school suspensions.

Toldson, Brown, and Sutton (2009) revealed that in 2006, the trend line of black male accomplishment reversed, when the percent of black males in the population with high school diplomas dropped for the first time since the census started collecting educational information (from 81.1% to 79.1%). In 2007, Toldson, Brown, and Sutton, (2009) showed that 89% of black men who were 39 years old (those graduating around 1986) had graduated from college, making them more likely to have a high school diploma than black men of any other age. In the most recent American Community Survey, among 39-year olds, the gap between black and white men was 5% (89% vs. 94%), but among 23-year olds, the gap was 14% (77% vs. 91%).

According to Toldson, Brown, and Sutton (2009), using a formula that subtracted students' chronological age from their grade level, the authors were able to determine whether students had been held back in school. The age and grade ranges used were as follows: (a) Grade 1-4 and age 11 or older; (b) Grade 5-8 and age 15 or older; (c) Grade 9 and 16 or older; (d) Grade 10 and 18 or older; and (e) Grade 11 and 19 or older. According to the findings, roughly 3.23% of black male students were held back between Grades 1 and 4, compared to 1.86% of white male students. By Grade 11, black males were about three times more likely than white males to have been held back. According to Margolis (2006), the lack of academic motivation for African-American adolescents, particularly males, has been of concern for decades. As well, low motivation, often presents itself as withdrawal, procrastination, disorganization, and cheating.

According to Martin (2004), gender may play a role in student motivation, with boys, more likely than girls, to fall apart when faced with challenges that require time

management strategies. Research shows that the problem of motivation occurs at all levels of education, as early as first grade, becoming more pronounced in the upper grades and often resulting in students becoming high school drop-outs. Yet, the challenge for states and urban schools is still to prepare students, yes even African-American males, to perform at high academic levels regardless of any barriers that may exist which is a mandate of the No Child Left Behind Act, waiver or no waiver (Kaplan, 2001; Black, 2003).

Purpose of the Study

According to Dweck (1986), being a high achiever and knowing one has done well in the past does not appear to translate directly into high confidence in one's abilities when faced with future challenges or current difficulties. Nor does it clearly predict the maintenance of one's ability to perform or learn under these conditions. One also might suppose that children who had the highest Intelligence Quotient (IQ) scores, achievement test scores, and grades would be the ones who had by far the highest expectancies for future test scores and grades, as well as for performance on novel experimental tasks. Surprisingly often, this is not the case. According to Dweck, indeed, M. Bandura and Dweck found that their low-confidence children tended to have somewhat higher achievement test scores than their high-confidence group. Interestingly, the low-confidence children did not have poorer opinions of their past attainment or abilities but faced the upcoming task with low expectancies of absolute and relative performance.

Hickey (2003) stated that motivation is an important construct for improving classroom teaching and learning. Twenty-two articles published in the *Elementary*

School Journal since 1991, list motivation as a descriptor. Most articles advance a modern "cognitive" view of achievement motivation. This view is generally based on the distinction between intrinsically and extrinsically motivated activities. This distinction is typically defined in terms of learning/mastery goals or ego/performance goals. Motivation continues to be a major focus of educational researchers, and especially educational psychologists. Therefore, significant developments in motivation are relevant to a wide audience.

McMillian (2003) stated that various researchers have argued that African-American male students are particularly vulnerable to disengagement. Much of this disengagement comes from the desire to be aloof from the pressures of their existence. As well, the theory that African-American males in school are seeking to be disengaged and cool as an ego booster comparable to the kind that white males find through attending good schools, landing prestigious jobs, and bringing home decent wages has been explored (Major & Billson, 1992). According to McMillian, researchers like Graham, Taylor, and Hudley (1998) support this claim when they argued that if African-American middle-school boys were more academically disengaged, then peer nominations would indicate that they would more likely be labeled as disinterested, noncompliant low-achievers. Additionally, they argued, African-American boys would be more likely to respect their low-achieving male counterparts. As expected, African-American boys were more likely to be labeled as low achievers who did "not follow... school rules" or "try...hard." Moreover, these boys were aware of these negative

perceptions. Graham and her colleagues concluded that African-American boys were more academically disengaged than their female counterparts were.

The purpose of this study is four fold:

1. to investigate the potential influence of the school environment, teacher-student relations, instructional delivery, parent-student relations, peer-student relations upon student attendance, student behavior, student engagement and student academic achievement;
2. to explore middle school male students' perceptions of their school environment, teacher-student relations, instructional delivery, parent-student relations, peer-student relations and these influencers impact on student motivation;
3. to explore middle school African-American male students' perceptions of these independent variables to see if there are influencers impacting their motivation; and
4. to explore strategies that may help school systems address African-American male students' motivation to engage in the academic process at the critical juncture before high school to decrease dropout rates.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in the ability to identify and explore the gaps between the methodologies of motivational strategies being used to increase male African-American urban middle school student's commitment to the academic process of learning. The overall effect of school achievement, and those variables perceived by

male African-American urban middle school students themselves as most significant to increasing their engagement in the academic process of learning are most valuable. This study attempts to join the African-American male urban middle school students' perception of motivators that increase their engagement in the academic process of learning and the motivational strategies used, if any, by the urban middle school to increase African-American male urban middle school students' engagement in the academic process of learning. The desired outcome of commitment to the academic process of learning should be measured by student attendance, student behavior, and student engagement and student academic achievement. African-American males engaged in the academic process of learning not only need the skills and knowledge to engage in the academic process of learning successfully, but they also have to be influenced or motivated to a level of personal expectation for success before they take on the academic assignment, in class or as homework. If a student is influenced to be personally motivated in actions and behaviors, and guided by a belief that they can be successful in performing any given task, that student holds a powerful life-defining jewel branded as *self-efficacy* (Bandura, 1997).

This study should be valuable to all educational stakeholders including students, parents, school leaders, teachers, and community leaders. Stakeholders should gain insight into what African-American males see as motivating factors affecting their commitment to the academic process of learning.

Summary

This study theorizes that student motivation is influenced by the independent variables school climate, teacher-student relationships, instructional delivery, parent-student relationships, and peer-student relationships. This study theorizes that these variables can ultimately lead to academic achievement in African-American males students in an urban middle school. A configuration of the variables is provided in Chapter III for the purpose of clarifying terms.

Further, for guiding this research study, a combination of the Self-Efficacy Theory developed by Bandura (1977), Symbolic Interaction framework developed by Blumer (1969), and Self-Determination Theory developed by Deci and Ryan (1985) were used to undergird and frame the research findings. A configuration of the theoretical framework and the variables is provided in Chapter III for clarifying relationships among variables and frameworks.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The intent of this chapter is to review relevant literature related to student motivation, the dependent variable in this study, operationalized as student attendance, student behavior, student engagement, and student academic achievement. Additionally, literature is also presented that supports the independent variables of this study, which are school climate, teacher-student relationships, parent-student relationships, and peer-student relationships. Accordingly, the literature review is organized to align with each of the study's variables.

Tyson (2002) suggests that black children begin school very much achievement-oriented and engaged with the process of schooling. This particular research effort is geared toward addressing causal factors affecting the continued academic motivation of black males enrolled in middle school, as focused purely on students' perception of an assortment of variables as influencers on motivation. The intent of this chapter is to identify and explore relevant studies related to student motivation towards academic commitment, the dependent variable in this study. The dependent variable, Student Motivation towards Academic Commitment (SMAC), is operationalized as student attendance, student behavior, student engagement, student academic performance, and student competition. The intent of this chapter is to also identify and explore relevant

studies related to the following independent variables: school climate, teacher-student relations, instructional delivery, parent-student relations, and peer-student relations. Studies, research articles, and reports are cited here to lend support to why this study is necessary and seeks to give additional insight to African-American male middle school students and the variables being aligned in order to correlate a relationship.

Historical Middle School Perspective

According to McEwin (1996), in 1963 William M. Alexander called for a new school in the middle in his now historic speech in Ithaca, New York, at the Cornell University Junior High School Conference. Since that time, separately organized 6-8 middle schools have been established throughout the United States while the middle school's predecessor, the 7-9 junior high school, has declined dramatically.

According to Yecke (2005), the American middle school made its debut in the early 1960s as a modification of the traditional junior high school, which housed grades 7, 8, and sometimes 9 in an environment designed to prepare students for the greater rigors of high school. As the 19th century drew to a close, the most common grade organization for American schools was an elementary school containing the first eight grades and a high school containing the last four—the 8/4 model. But concerns were expressed about upper-level elementary students spending too much time in a repetitious curriculum, culminating in an 1894 recommendation from the Committee of Ten on Secondary Studies to shift to a 6/6 structure. That meant moving students in grade 7 and 8 from elementary into high school (Yecke, 2005).

According to McEwin (1996), one of the six original functions of the junior high school, and the junior high school's modern successor the middle school, was that of articulation bridging the educational transition from childhood to adolescence for the junior high school student. Today, this function remains a vital part of the mission and operation of middle schools and has been expanded to include the transition from middle school to the high school. Because of increasing concerns for making K-12 schooling a continuous system of movement for students with the least possible disruption, and yet still provide appropriate educational opportunities and programs, the dual bridging function played by middle schools is becoming even more important (McEwin, 1996).

According to Yecke (2005), other proposals were considered between 1908 and 1911, including a modified proposal to split the upper half of the 6/6 organization into junior and senior levels (6/3/3). This suggestion reflected an interest in allowing students to receive six years of schooling at the elementary level and an additional three more years of instruction, since many students were not going to graduate from high school and in that era were not expected to. The first "junior high schools" fitting this organizational design appeared in 1909 (Yecke, 2005).

According to Yecke (2005), shortly after World War I, the United States witnessed a dramatic rise in elementary school enrollments, providing a pragmatic reason to move toward the junior high model. It was more efficient to shift several grades out of elementary schools, preserving the neighborhood school for the youngest students, while constructing more centralized and less proximate buildings for older students. This demographic trend continued for several decades. The new junior high schools generally

included grades 7, 8, and 9, and resembled high schools in both organization and academic orientation.

According to Yecke (2005), the inclusion of ninth grade maintained a link with the high school that was strong enough to drive the curriculum of junior high schools, so they differed little from senior high schools. By the 1920s, educators were wrestling with how to address the differing academic abilities and divergent interests that they noted in their students. One junior high proponent, Leonard Koos, proposed that junior high schools should provide "differentiation of work through partially variable curricula, groups moving at differing rates, promotion by subject, permitting brighter pupils to carry more courses, and supervised study" (Yecke, 2005, p. 25).

According to Yecke (2005), by the early 1960s, the first middle schools began to emerge, a change that involved moving ninth grade up to high school and moving at least one grade (sixth and sometimes fifth) out of the elementary school and into the new middle school. This configuration removed a direct high school influence from the middle level and introduced younger children into high school (Yecke, 2005).

A "scientific theory" known as "brain periodization" or the "plateau learning theory" was introduced to the education world in the late 1970s (Yecke, 2005, p. 9). The "plateau learning theory" claimed that brain growth in children ages 12 to 14 reaches a plateau, at which time "the brain virtually ceases to grow," and that teaching complex material during that period will have damaging effects on children. Thus, middle school advocates now had a "scientific" reason to dilute the rigor of the academic offering sat the middle school. This theory was formally introduced to the middle school community

at the 1979 National Middle School Association (NMSA) conference and, bizarre as the "plateau learning theory" may have been, did much to drive the watering-down of the middle school curricula. Although, the theory was swiftly discredited by other scientists surveys indicate that, as recently as 1995, many educators remained committed to the "plateau learning theory." Regardless of whether their commitment is based on ideology or convenience, the "plateau learning theory" led to low-challenge academic expectations and low achievement in the middle grades (Yecke, 2005).

According to Yecke (2005), in 1983, publication of *A Nation at Risk* triggered an education reform strategy by alerting the American public to the sharp decline in U.S. academic performance, warning, "The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and a people" (p. 11). This report stimulated attention to the achievement of American students, triggering a national push for excellence. In 1989, a governors' summit was convened by President George H. W. Bush in Charlottesville, Virginia, to set the course for this national education movement with the goal of developing rigorous academic standards and holding schools accountable for their attainment. By happenstance, 1989 was also the year that the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development released an influential report titled "Turning Points: Preparing Youth for the 21st Century." The report echoed concerns formerly raised by professor of education at the University of Florida, Paul George and declared that nearly all early adolescents are dysfunctional. Phrases such as "grave situation" and "serious jeopardy" were used to

describe the situation of middle grade students, and both traditional education and an apathetic public were blamed (Yecke, 2005).

In early 2005, the National Governors Association announced a new initiative to address the latest crisis in American education: the state of the nation's high schools (Yecke, 2005). Across the country, nearly one third of American students eventually drop out, which annually costs the U.S. economy an estimated $16 billion in lost productivity. Governors were joined in this announcement by Microsoft founder Bill Gates, a longtime crusader for high school reform, who has contributed more than $1 billion toward this effort in the past decade. Although well intended, the governors' solutions misidentify the cause of "high school" problems. Abundant evidence indicates that the seeds that produce high school failure are sown in grades 5-8. In far too many cases, American middle schools are where student academic achievement goes to die (Yecke, 2005).

Student Motivation

The importance of student motivation has varied from peripheral to central in psychological and educational research over the years. Currently, research on student motivation seems to be central to research in learning and teaching contexts. Researchers interested in basic questions about how and why some students seem to learn and thrive in school contexts, while other students seem to struggle to develop the knowledge and cognitive resources to be successful academically, must consider the role of motivation (Pintrich, 2003).

According to Glynn (2005), motivation is an internal state that arouses, directs, and sustains human behavior. Motivation plays a fundamental role in learning. Today, more than ever, students' motivation is an area of discussion and debate. An area constantly in need of innovative approaches because the societal factors that play a role in motivation are constantly changing. In order to effectively foster students' motivation, there is an essential need to understand why students strive for particular goals, how intensively they strive, how long they strive, and what feelings and emotions characterize them in this process (Glynn, 2005).

Pintrich (2003) suggests that there are seven substantive questions that are important directions for current and future motivational science research efforts. They include:

1. What do students want?
2. What motivates students in classrooms?
3. How do students get what they want?
4. Do students know what they want or what motivates them?
5. How does motivation lead to cognition and cognition to motivation?
6. How does motivation change and develop?
7. What is the role of context and culture? (p. 669)

Each of the questions is addressed in terms of current knowledge claims and future directions for research in motivational science.

Of Pintrich (2003), seven substantive questions—question four: Do students know what they want or what motivates them?—is very important to this researcher.

Models of self-regulation that assume the intentional pursuit of conscious goals have certainly made an impact on understanding student motivation and learning. Yet, there are many occasions when motivation and learning, in the classroom and in life in general, are not so conscious, intentional, and self-regulating. In research on cognition, there has been a great deal of research on implicit cognition where cognitive processing occurs outside conscious awareness and control. In a similar manner, the work on implicit motives or unconscious needs suggests that motives or needs may operate to influence cognition and behavior, but at a level below conscious awareness and control, in effect suggesting that individuals do not need to know what they want in order for motives or needs to influence them (Pintrich, 2003).

Schultheiss (2001) argues that motives do have a direct, motivating effect on behavior, and that this effect depends on the type of incentive present in a given situation. Also argued was a main claim will be that motives are aroused by and respond to directly perceived and experienced incentives rather than to verbal-symbolic incentives. Failure to present incentives in an experiential format, or lack of control for features of the testing situation, that cue motives experientially will produce non-significant or sometimes even contradictory effects in the individual.

Glynn (2005) suggests that educational researchers have adopted four basic orientations to motivation when studying student learning—behavioral, humanistic, cognitive, and social. Although these orientations are described separately, this should be kept in mind that many researchers adopt aspects of more than one orientation when

studying learning, with hybrids resulting such as a cognitive-social orientation. All of these orientations shed light on the motivation of students in general education programs.

Some researchers, according to Glynn (2005), have identified potential problems associated with the use of incentives and reinforcements to shape college students' behavior. First, educational researchers with a behavioral orientation to motivation focus on concepts such as incentive and reinforcement. An incentive, these researchers contend, is something that makes a behavior more or less likely to occur. One major problem is that the students may not develop intrinsic motivation to learn. In some conditions, when students are offered incentives for doing tasks they naturally find motivating, their desire to perform the tasks can actually decrease. External incentives also can focus students' attention on the incentives as ends in themselves, rather than serve as a kind of feedback on the progress students are making (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999).

Secondly, according to Reeve (1996), educational researchers with a humanistic orientation emphasize college students' capacities for personal growth, their freedom to choose their destinies, and their desires to achieve and excel. Humanists have used various constructs to express students' need to reach their potentials. Maslow (1968, 1970) described this need as self-actualization. Building upon Maslow's theory, humanists currently investigate students' self-determination, which is their ability to make choices and control what they do in contexts such as general education programs (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991).

Thirdly, according to Schunk (2004), when educational researchers adopt a cognitive orientation to motivation, they emphasize college students' goals, plans, expectations, and attributions. Attribution is an explanation for the cause of a particular behavior. When students respond to instructional events, they are viewed as responding to their attributions about these events (Weiner, 1992).

Lastly, according to Shapiro and Levine (1999), educational researchers with a social orientation to motivation emphasize students' identities and their interpersonal relationships in communities, particularly in the learning communities that increasingly characterize general education programs. Interrelated courses, activity centers, and Websites are all examples of learning communities. Students' identities are shaped in communities and a great deal of knowledge can be learned, both intentionally and incidentally, in them. To maintain their membership in their communities, students are motivated to learn the attitudes, values, and behaviors of those communities and model them. The process of modeling is central to the learning that takes place in those communities (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Jessen, Ramette, & Balshem, 1999; Greeno, Collins, & Resnick, 1996).

Student Attendance

According to Henry (2007), the United States Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) reported that student attendance issues rooted in truancy is a serious concern, so much so that student attendance issues rooted in truancy is touching most school districts in the United States. Although attendance is not a new problem student attendance issues rooted in truancy warrants a great deal of attention as

the beginning of several negative indicators affecting student achievement and can be predictive of maladjustment, poor academic performance, school dropout, substance abuse, delinquency, and teenage pregnancy (Henry, 2007).

According to Kearney (2008), absenteeism from school is a serious public health issue for mental health professionals, physicians, and educators. The prevalence of unexcused absences from school exceeds that of major childhood behavior disorders and is a key risk factor for violence, injury, substance use, psychiatric disorders, and economic deprivation.

The National Forum on Education Statistics [NFES] (2009) documented the impact of school attendance by reporting that high school dropouts have been found to exhibit a history of high levels of absenteeism throughout their childhood, at higher rates than other high school graduates do. Those students who dropped out of high school missed considerably more days in first grade than those students that graduated from high school. Sadly, how students start is an indicator and seemingly the difference in how they finish. In eighth grade, this pattern was even more apparent. By ninth grade, attendance was shown to be a key indicator significantly correlated with high school dropout or high school graduation (NFES, 2009).

Brenneman (2013) highlighted where the country is possibly headed to address student attendance issues. In that the state of Texas, as with animals such as grizzly bears and migratory birds, the green light was given to systems for school students to be fitted with global positioning system (GPS) trackers as they are being called “elusive American high school students” or Americanus adolescencus.

According to Brenneman (2013), this craze is an attempt to mitigate truancy and as such more school districts are turning to technology, that they might find where absent students go (salmon fishing?) and lure them back. In Austin, Texas, one of the newest experimenters, schools are seeing progress after installing a GPS tracking program that requires consent from both students and parents before initialization. According to Brenneman, the *Austin American-Statesman, reported that* students receive a GPS devices upon entering the program and must check in with the school multiple times a day. Seventy-five students initially enrolled in the program last year, and early numbers show average attendance increased from 78% to 90% (Brenneman, 2013).

Brenneman (2013) stated that in the 4,200-student Northside Texas, district, the mandatory Radio Frequency Identification System has ruffled feathers. The Dallas-based AIM Truancy Solutions runs Austin's program and stands to make up to $1 million annually for demonstrable results, which means there is good opportunity in GPS-locating services. This is not a fad but a financial endgame because the state of Texas is one of many states that use student attendance to determine federal funding, so districts are understandably keen to make sure students come to class. According to Brenneman, GPS tracking is not the only method employed to lessen students' attendance problems. Brenneman stated that new longitudinal-data systems, used to identify struggling students, make sure to track attendance as well so that early interventions might be provided. Some districts use truancy officers to hold parents responsible, while other districts try to offer services that attract students to school, such as haircuts (Brenneman, 2013).

Wilkins (2008) suggests that research showed the issues of school non-attendance, truancy, and dropping out, has traditionally examined social, family, and personal variables that place students at risk for such behaviors, not a lack of haircuts. However, from interviews with students who were previous nonattenders, Wilkins, suggests plainly that the cause of student's detachment from school was related to what was happening within the school setting itself. Likewise, positive characteristics of the school setting were related to students' motivation for attending an alternative education site.

Wilkins (2008) stated that research on causes of non-attendance has generally focused on family, personal, and school causes. Although there have been studies on the family dynamics of anxious nonattenders, most studies on the causes of non-attendance have focused on truants. These studies have identified deficient guidance or parental supervision, poverty and substandard living conditions, and lack of awareness of attendance laws as causes of students' non-attendance. The personal causes that have been identified tend to overlap with school causes. Academic difficulties, for example, have been linked to truant behavior, and many researchers pinpoint feelings of isolation and alienation that students experience in the school setting (Finn, 1989; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986).

According to Wilkins (2008), in a study that assessed functions of anxiety-related non-attendance using various parent and youth measures, found, in line with previous findings, predictors for a degree of school absenteeism. Those predictors were (a) avoidance of school related stimuli that provoke negative affectivity, (b) escape from

aversive social and/or evaluative situations, (c) pursuit of attention from significant others, and (d) pursuit of tangible rewards outside of school (Kearney, 2007; Kearney & Silverman, 1990).

While Wilkins' (2008) findings of other researchers indicate general school and personal causes of students' non-attendance, they do not shed light on the gaps that lay within the students' personal perceptions of influencers on attendance. Wilkins, in an attempt to do this used a qualitative research method conducted with four truant students. The study revealed four themes that emerged from interviews that motivated students to attend the current school: (a) school climate, (b) academic environment, (c) discipline, and (d) relationships with teachers (Wilkins, 2008).

Dube and Orpinas (2009) stated that school absenteeism is a heterogeneous behavioral problem; children miss school or skip classes for multiple reasons. Kearney (2007) proposed that absences from school might be classified as child-motivated or non-child-motivated. Child-motivated absences are at the volition of the child, partly due to increased autonomy, whereas non-child-motivated absences manifest through influences external to the child (Schulenberg, Maggs, & Hurrelmann, 1999; Steinberg, 1996).

According to Skinner (1953), the operant theory of learning developed by Kearney and Silverman (1993) and the functional model of school refusal behavior (FMSRB) were combined in a clinical setting to help us understand child-motivated school refusal behavior. The model comprised assessment of negative and positive reinforcing behaviors through four functional profiles that described why a child was not attending school:

1. Negative reinforcement: avoiding fear- or anxiety-producing situations at school;
2. Negative reinforcement: escaping from adverse social or evaluative school situations;
3. Positive reinforcement: pursuing parental attention;
4. Positive reinforcement: pursuing positive tangible reinforcements, such as watching television or playing video games. (p. 81)

Some children may have more than one functional profile, and therefore, behaviors may be both negatively and positively reinforced (Kearney & Silverman, 1993).

Roby (2004) conducted a study to enable educators an opportunity to gain knowledge and insight concerning the relationship of students' attendance and students' achievement. He compared Ohio proficiency test on students on grade levels 4, 6, 9, and 12 with their attendance averages to see if a positive correlation exists between attendance and student achievement. The results of the study showed that there is a significant relationship between student attendance and student achievement in those grade levels. He further stated that the correlation between students' attendance and achievement rate is moderate to strong, with the most significant relationship occurring at the ninth grade level. He concluded that this variance could be because of the academic standards and expectations at this grade level, which are high, and attending school on a regular basis is certainly a factor. To support this fact, he did an analysis of annual attendance rate for students that had many absences and found that the result showed high significance of students' learning time loss per school year (Roby, 2004). According to

Roby, truancy adversely affected the academics of students that were involved in the study. These students were described as having academic underachievement. As a result of their truancy, and lack of attendance they missed tests, did not understand examination questions, did not know where their classmates were in terms of work, or had gone down a set.

Chen and Lin (2008) reported that on the average the effect of attending lectures corresponds to a 9.4% to 18.0% improvement in exam performance for those who choose to attend classes. Marburger (2006) puts forth that the relevant question for education, particularly economic education, in a college setting is whether absenteeism interferes with learning. Maburger pointed to empirical literature that suggests an inverse relationship between absenteeism and learning. Marburger also pointed to a study on the impact of enforcing an attendance policy on absenteeism students' performance. The results showed that an enforced mandatory attendance policy significantly reduced absenteeism and improved exam performance (Marburger, 2006).

According to Henry (2007), research also indicates that the negative effect of truancy occurs beyond adolescence, predicting poor adult outcomes, including violence, marital instability, job instability, adult criminality, and incarceration. Akin to truancy is student mobility, which can have a negative effect on student academic achievement. Engec (2006) indicated that as the mobility of students increased during the school year, the student test performance on the criterion-reference test and norm-reference test decreased. Moreover, suspension rates were high for students who had changed schools within a school year. Also, as a practical solution, students who experience single or

multiple transfers within a school year should receive particular attention because they are likely to have discipline and performance problems, naturally these would be rooted in attendance issues (Engec, 2006).

According to the National Forum on Educational Statistics (2009), the school's disciplinary response to absenteeism exacerbates the issue of missing classroom instruction and the response often includes detention or suspension. Any absence whether excused or not, denies students the opportunity to learn in accordance with the school's instructional program. Students who miss school, are sometimes further excluded from learning opportunities because of chronic absenteeism (National Forum on Educational Statistics, 2009).

Gump (2004) suggested that instead of persuading students to attend by giving credit for attendance or even simply hoping they will attend out of a sense of duty or obligation, educators should try presenting material in as compelling a manner as possible to increase attendance. While far from avant-garde and verging on platitudinous, Gump argued that such a suggestion nevertheless serves as a reminder that one of the responsibilities of teaching is to inspire in students or at least to attempt to inspire in them the same interest that led the teachers to pursue the subject in the first place (Gump, 2004).

Student Behavior

Noguera (2003) stated that throughout the U.S. schools most frequently punish the students who have the greatest academic, social, economic and emotional needs. An examination, of which students are most likely to be suspended, expelled, or removed

from the classroom for punishment, reveals that minorities (especially blacks and Latinos), males, and low achievers are vastly overrepresented. The enactment of zero tolerance policies related to discipline in school districts has contributed to a significant increase in the number of children who are being suspended and expelled from school.

According to Harris (2002), the social environment of adolescents changed rapidly in the 1980s, increasing risk for adolescent health behavior. The huge influx of mothers into the labor market and the rise in single-parent families has meant that adolescents now spend less time with parents or adults, leaving greater time unsupervised and with peers. Adolescents from single-parent families are more likely than their peers from two-parent families to engage in health-compromising behaviors, including delinquency, violence and unprotected sex (Dornbusch, Carlsmith, Bushwall, Ritter, Leiderman, Hastorf, et al., 1985; National Research Council 1996; Harris, 2002).

Booker (2011) showed that disparities in how discipline is handled for diverse student populations in other forms of discipline are well documented. This is particularly the case for office referrals and out-of-school suspension. Booker also stated for example, that African-American students are more frequently referred to the office than their Caucasian and Hispanic counterparts. According to Booker, the effects are noted even after controlling for the socioeconomic status of the students. More germane to the mandatory versus discretionary exploration focus of this study are the varying reasons students are referred. While Caucasian students are frequently referred to the office for specific rule breaking infractions, (e.g. smoking, vandalism, leaving without permission), African-American students are more likely referred for more subjective infractions (e.g.

disrespect, excessive noise, threat). Skiba, Michael, Nardo, and Peterson (2002) found that when considering reasons for referral from a gender perspective, boys are more likely than girls to receive an office referral for a range of major and minor offenses, with the exception of truancy.

According to Wright (2006), research found that adolescents are more likely to threaten or attack others and jeopardize physical well-being when they lack relationships and ties and are disconnected from others in the proximate environment. Conversely, students who are involved in socially constructive activities and have those social ties tend to reap the benefits of social capital that are inherent in close, cooperative relationships. Through viable social connections, a normative frame of reference or expectation for conduct is communicated across family, school and neighborhood domains. This aspect of adolescent sociability is an important pathway for accessing and using social capital (Wright, 2006).

Harris (2002) suggests that adolescents who have low expectations for their future may feel that they have nothing to lose and engage in more risk behavior than adolescents with high expectations. For instance, teens with expectations of early mortality might be more likely to engage in delinquent or violent behaviors or become sexually active at a young age. Harris also suggests that there is, in the context of school, an expectation for adolescents' expectations to influence individual behavior such that a "climate" of low future expectations promote greater involvement in risk behavior by youth in that context than a school climate with high expectations. Harris suggests for example that adolescents who attend a school in which comprehensive student expectations for a

college education are low might be more likely to engage in illegal behavior. This behavior, regarding drugs or weapons, would be more likely than in adolescents in school with high aggregate of educational expectations because the normative school climate would attach less risk to such behavior, with less to lose in terms of future education (Harris, 2002).

Booker (2011) stated that Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEPs) are schools designed to serve students who demonstrate difficulty functioning at their home campus. In contrast to educational and therapeutic alternative settings, Booker stated that DAEPs are aimed at correcting, or managing the behavior of disruptive students. Considered not to be "schools of choice," student entrance to a DAEP is initiated by administrative referral from the home school (Lange & Sletten, 2002). According to Foley and Pang (2006), a nationwide survey of alternative schools and programs for children at risk conducted by the United States Department of Education, indicated that there is a shortage of schools to meet the need. Furthermore, 54% of existing disciplinary alternative schools had exceeded maximum enrollment capacity during the 1999 through the 2001 school years (Kleiner, Porch, & Farris, 2002).

Booker (2011) shares that despite the increase in placement of students in DAEPs, research exploring the connection between specific pathways of student matriculation and student characteristics does not exist. According to Katsiyannis and Williams (1998), the documentation of entrance and exit patterns for alternative education programs is important as alternative education programs reduces "placements based on administrative convenience or isolation of 'undesirables,' denial of education services, and engagement

in haphazard practices that lack planning and adequately trained personnel" (p. 282). In addition, understanding trends in student discipline provides useful information for those serving on discipline review committees, developing interventions, and attempting to improve the climate and safety of schools. Ideally, understanding reasons students were placed in DAEP might lead to reduction in DAEP enrollment and increase success at the home campus (Katsiyannis & Williams, 1998).

According to Booker (2011), student placement in a DAEP was initially considered mandatory for conduct punishable under Zero Tolerance policies. Initially developed to extend gun control laws to schools, Zero Tolerance policies expanded the ability of administrators to engage in the "implementation of punitive and judicial forms of discipline" (Casella, 2003, p. 874). Zero Tolerance policies, were implemented by the federal government in 1994 as a disciplinary mechanism to reduce violence in U.S. schools. These forms of discipline include in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, placement in disciplinary alternative education programs, expulsion, and placement in juvenile justice programs. Offenses considered mandatory and subject to Zero Tolerance include felonies, terroristic threats, and assault or murder (Cortez & Montecel, 1999; Foley & Pange, 2006; Hosley, 2003).

Student Engagement

According to Newmann (1992), the most immediate and persisting issue for students and teachers' is not low achievement, but student disengagement. The most obviously disengaged students disrupt classes, skip them, or fail to complete assignments. More typically, disengaged students behave well in school. They attend class and

complete the work, but with little indication of excitement, commitment, or pride in mastery of the curriculum. In contrast, engaged students make a psychological investment in learning. They try hard to learn what school offers. They take pride not simply in earning the formal indicators of success (grades), but in understanding the material and incorporating or internalizing the material in their lives. The importance of student engagement becomes clearer if we consider the relationship of teacher to student in contrast to professional client relationships in other professions such as law, engineering, finance, management, and, in some cases, medicine (Newmann, 1992). In other professions, the client often recognizes a problem and voluntarily seeks the help of a professional.

According to Hickey (2003), in recent years, some educational researchers who study motivation have been expanding their focus to consider the broader context of motivated activity, or activity that gets and keeps students engaged. Newmann (1992) stated for teachers, the challenge is how to get students to do academic work and to take academic work seriously enough to learn; for students, the challenge is how to cope with teachers' demands so as to avoid boredom, to maintain self-respect, and, at the same time, to succeed in school.

Newmann (1992) urges educational professionals to embrace the fact that meaningful learning cannot be delivered to students like pizza to be consumed or videos to be observed. Lasting learning, Newmann says, develops largely through the labor of the student, who must be enticed to participate in a continuous cycle of studying, producing, correcting mistakes, and starting over again. Students cannot be expected to

achieve unless they concentrate, work, and invest themselves in the mastery of school tasks. This is the sense in which student engagement is critical to educational success; to enhance achievement, one must first learn how to engage students (Newmann, 1992).

Hickey (2003) stated that regardless of perspective, motivational practices are ultimately about getting and keeping students engaged in learning. Put differently, from a sociocultural perspective, engagement is a function of the degree to which participants in knowledgeable activity are attuned to the constraints and affordances of social practices and identity. Hickey goes on to say that, this differs in important ways from the empiricist view of engagement as a function of contingencies in the environment. As well, the rationalist view of engagement as a function of learners' goals, expectancies, and values: "Regarding motivational issues, the situative perspective emphasizes ways that social practices are organized to encourage and support engaged participation by members of communities and that are understood by individuals to support the continuing development of their personal identities" (Greeno & The Middle School Mathematics Through Application Project, 1998, p. 11).

Hickey (2003) found that a centerpiece of a sociocultural view of motivation is the notion of engaged participation. Viewing motivation as engaged participation in knowledge practices places the burden for motivating engagement on those practices rather than on the environment (in a mechanistic, behaviorist view) or on individuals (as in a contextualist, rationalist view). In other words, if the "community" in a classroom does not value participation in knowledge practices associated with the intended curriculum, the "community" or classroom will be a difficult place for any individual to

participate in those practices. Hickey stated this is not to say that students are not learning; by virtue of their presence in classrooms, all students are participating in sociocultural rituals and are therefore learning. The critical point is that the knowledge practices that learners are participating in (and therefore learning) may be unrelated or antagonistic to the intended practices, thus compliant non-engagement is in effect.

Newmann (1992) asked the question: what is compliant non-engagement? Then, Newmann began to first define student engagement. Student engagement, according to Newmann, in academic work environment is the student's psychological investment in an effort directed toward learning. Understanding, or mastering the knowledge, skills, or crafts that academic work is intended to promote engagement, involves psychological investment in learning, comprehending, or mastering knowledge, skills, and crafts, not simply a commitment to complete assigned tasks or to acquire symbols of high performance such as grades or social approval. Students may complete academic work and perform well without being engaged in the mastery of a topic, skill, or craft.

Nocon (2005) stated that this represents a form of resistance that can be described as compliant nonengagement. Compliant nonengagement is in effect when students are compliant in completing assignments but not academically engaged in the process of learning or growing.

Newmann (1992) observed that academic work consists of the tasks, usually specified by teachers, that students are asked to undertake in order to master the knowledge, skills, and crafts that serve as the instructional objectives of schooling. The work can occur as part of classroom instruction, homework, or exams and the work may

include different types of reading, writing, computing, participating in discussions, and individual and group projects. The boundaries for academic work should not be limited to tasks commonly pursued in the teaching of traditional school subjects of the liberal arts (e.g., mathematics, sciences, humanities, languages). A more adequate conception would recognize as academic work attempts to master any field of expertise that is based on a tradition of accumulated public knowledge and that, through activities of practitioners and/or researchers, continually strives to create advanced levels of understanding or performance in the field. In this sense, the mastery of subjects as diverse as electronics, childcare, modern dance, or cosmetology can involve academic work (Newmann, 1992).

Hickey (2003) said that one could argue that the standards and values that motivate engagement are a function of the same negotiations between the social and material worlds that gave rise to other knowledge. If so, they are also part of that knowledge. Engaged participation is about negotiating one's identity with different and potentially conflicting and competing communities of practice. This necessarily involves both conformity to and alienation from prevailing standards and values. This is because these standards and values are a function of the knowledge communities those practices represent. As such, what is typically construed as internalization is really better understood as continued participation in the use of those standards and values. Not surprisingly, there is strong resistance to this notion among motivation theorists. Certainly, the notion is counterintuitive to those whose scholarly roots are in psychology (Hickey, 2003).

According to Newmann (1992), the point seems almost too obvious to mention, but too many of us (educators and parents) have learned the hard way that the point cannot be taken for granted. That point being that student disengagement posed less of a problem in earlier times when secondary schools served, more select populations of students, when families offered more cohesive, sustained support for students' investment in schoolwork, and when youth had fewer opportunities for activities that now compete with schoolwork. Today, however, schools' ability to engage students is constantly tested by increased cultural diversity in the student body, by large proportions of students who need special forms of care that school staff, traditionally have not been expected to offer, and by a host of powerful distractions that compete for students' time and emotional investment.

Ultimately, Newmann (1992) declared that in an environment where the mastery of subjects as diverse as electronics, childcare, modern dance, or cosmetology is expected, the professional is trusted to have important knowledge that will have clear benefits for the client, usually within a reasonably short period of time. But teaching children, Newmann said, is different, the teaching of children, is more coercive. Children are told by society that they have a problem (ignorance) that must be solved regardless of whether they feel a need for education. The children are then subjected to a program of labor that the teacher prescribes, and parents endorse by sending them off to the school. To the child, immediate benefits of this labor are rarely self-evident, partly because they are projected far into the future, to be useful for college or in adult life when taking care of a family. These circumstances seem to serve, in some way, to diminish student trust in

the professional, which is necessary if the student is to invest the considerable effort required for learning (Newmann, 1992).

Student Academic Achievement

According to Stone and Lane (2003), student achievement is important to school leaders. The No Child Left Behind policy made achievement on the test more important than achievement in the classroom, which used to be known as learning. Stone and Lane pointed out that most states implemented statewide assessment programs to be used for high-stakes testing purposes. Some of these assessments involved performance-based tasks that were assumed not only to serve as motivators for improving student achievement and learning, but they were also assumed to encourage instructional strategies and techniques in the classroom that were more consistent with reform-oriented educational outcomes (Stone & Lane, 2003).

Ford and Harris (1996), in an earlier study, proposed that we pay closer attention to the many factors influencing the achievement levels of African-American students. Ford maintained that encouraging the potential and talents of all youth requires a broadened vision of giftedness that reflects an understanding that talent varies markedly with cultural, racial, economic, and linguistic backgrounds.

Hébert (1998) put forward that the struggles to improve the educational experience of African-American youth and researchers offered new explanations for variations in the achievement levels of African-American students. Howard (2008) suggests that much of this work, with African-American youth, has been concerned with the identification of informative research, effective strategies, and critical concepts. This

effort seeking to address two concerns: (a) reasons that explain the persistent underachievement of African-American males in U.S. schools and society, and (b) potential interventions that can help improve the educational aspirations and life chances of African-American males.

According to Styron and Nyman (2008), one of the desired outcomes of the federal No Child Left Behind Act was greater academic achievement among student subgroups such as black students and economically disadvantaged students. Schools had to improve student achievement in all subgroups to meet accountability standards as mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act. Schools that failed to meet determined criteria established in the No Child Left Behind Act for two consecutive years were sanctioned by the law and held accountable to implement specific school-based interventions to meet performance standards.

According to Styron and Nyman (2008) under the No Child Left Behind federal legislation, schools had to meet specific criteria in order to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), including proficiency on standardized tests, test participation, attendance in the elementary and middle schools, and graduation rates in the high schools. A school earning AYP for three or more consecutive years is recognized as a "Distinguished School." A school not making AYP for two or more consecutive years is designated as being "Needs Improvement" and provides additional support and options to children. Beginning in 2008, the state of Georgia began using the results of the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) and Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGT) to make a final determination of a school's AYP status.

Furthermore, African-American student achievement, based upon the Georgia Department of Education [GADOE] (2013) statistics, must become of more importance to African-American families. According to the GADOE, 70.6% of Georgia middle schools did not make AYP during the 2011 school year as opposed to 78.5%, which made AYP in 2010, a 7.93% decline. Statistics for all Georgia schools included 23.5% (64,790 youth) of all black students in AYP grade levels (299,076) tested Basic, or did not meet CRCT Math proficiency. Another 33,218.5 or 12.1% did not meet CRCT Reading/English Language Arts proficiency in the state's Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) regarding the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on selected state assessments in Reading/English Language Arts and Mathematics.

Key Influencers

According to Hébert (1998), the struggle to improve the educational experience of African-American youth continues, and researchers within the past decade have offered new explanations for variations in the achievement levels of African-American students. Hébert mentioned how research proposed that we pay closer attention to the many factors influencing the achievement levels of African-American students. Hébert exclaimed, that research maintained that encouraging the potential and talents of all youth requires a broadened vision of giftedness that reflects an understanding that talent varies markedly with cultural, racial, economic, and linguistic backgrounds.

According to Hébert (1998), research found that in underachievement among early adolescent gifted black males and females and found that black males were more likely than females to underachieve. Black males exerted less effort academically and

maintained more negative attitudes about school than females. Black males also found school less relevant and less personally meaningful than did the females and were more pessimistic about social factors. According to Hébert, research suggested that black males had a need for more positive information about their racial heritage, more exposure to black male role models, increased affective educational experiences to feel connected to teachers, and counseling experiences to cope effectively with anger and disappointment regarding social injustices faced by African-American youth.

What Hébert (1998) put forth was critical as an explanation of influence on academic achievement, because according to Ozer, Ritterman, and Wanis (2010), late childhood and early adolescence represent a critical transition in the developmental and academic trajectory of youth, a time in which there is an upsurge in academic disengagement and psychopathology.

School Climate

According to Anderson (1982), the school environment has long been recognized as a powerful influence on the perceptions and, therefore, behaviors of individuals in schools. Much of what is relative to a good school environment and positive school climate is set in place by the principal's leadership as well as rises and falls at the capable or incapable hands of the principal decisions.

Fisher (2003) stated that research analyzing school climate, dates back to the late 1950s. The first person attributed with the usage of the term organizational climate is Cornell in 1955. Cornell described organizational climate as a delicate blending of interpretations by individuals of the self-same organization (Fisher, 2003).

According to Anderson (1982), school climate and school atmosphere have been defined as summary concepts dealing with the total environmental quality within an organization. Anderson stated that Renato Tagiuri described the climate in dimensions of an organizational environment to include different aspects of the organization. Those aspects identified were (a) ecology (the physical and material aspects), (b) the organizations milieu (the social dimension concerned with the presence of persons and groups), (c) the organizations social system (the social dimension concerned with the patterned relationships of persons and groups), and (d) the organizations culture (the social dimension concerned with belief systems, values, cognitive structures, and meaning). Other words that refer to concepts of an environment include field, behavior setting, situation, setting, conditions, and circumstances. Some descriptors are more restricted to the realm of education such as school environment, school learning climate, school organizational climate, and school social climate (Fisher, 2003; Anderson, 1982)

According to Finnan and Hopfenberg (1994), a culture is actually dynamic and ever changing. A culture absorbs influences from outside; a culture accommodates changes imposed upon the culture, and the culture creates opportunities for change in the culture itself. A school culture provides a web of meaning to all members of the school community. A school culture shapes how members of a school community use resources, structure experiences, and relate to the wider world (Finnan & Hopfenberg, 1994). According to Finnan and Hopfenberg, school culture includes the values, traditions, attitudes, and interpretations understood by members of the school community. School climate involves a composite of norms, expectations, and beliefs, which

characterize the school social system as perceived by members of the social system (Brookover & Lezotte, 1979).

Therefore, according to Fisher (2003), school climate is organizational climate with a specified context. In context, school climate embraces the milieu of personalities, the principal and teachers, interacting within the sociological and psychological framework present in all schools. The school climate sets the tone for the school‘s approach to resolving problems, trust and mutual respect, attitudes, and generating new ideas. Common elements found throughout the literature pertaining to climate involve enduring characteristics that distinguish one school from another (Fisher, 2003).

According to Fisher (2003), a school‘s climate plays a direct and critical role in determining what the school is and what the school might become. Many principals are looking to shape school climate as a way of enhancing school improvement. One of the areas that principals need to consider as related to school climate is the use of suspensions in discipline.

According to Lee (2011), studies show that schools engaged in frequent use of suspension as a disciplinary option may perpetuate a school climate that is perceived as harsh, punitive, and rejecting of students. Good quality school climates that are perceived to be cohesive, low in friction, and overall more satisfying may protect adolescents low in effortful control from emotional and behavioral problems because they provide a sense of belonging and connectedness to the school (Lee, 2011).

According to DiPaola (2005), an organizations climate is a set of measurable, shared perceptions by the members of the organization that influence their behavior and

that distinguish one organization from another and influences. Thus, in this study school climate is an independent variable that is examined regarding its influence on individual outcomes.

According to McEvoy and Welker (2000), the concept of organizational climate is considered by some as somewhat elusive and has been assessed in a number of different ways, most researchers such as Kuperminc, Leadbeater, and Blatt (2001), Loukas and Robinson (2004), Roeser, Eccles, and Sameroff (1998), Roeser, Eccles, and Sameroff (2000) agree that student personal experiences of the school climate mediate actual school climate effects. From this perspective, individual perceptions of the school climate can contribute to middle school student outcomes. A substantial body of research documents the role of perceived school climate in student achievement (McEvoy & Welker, 2000).

According to Roeser et al. (2000), in addition to adolescent's academic performance, student perceptions of the school's climate may contribute to how they feel about themselves, and negotiate the transitions characteristic of early adolescence. Many educators view school climate and student achievement as separate considerations. For some, the idea of promoting a high quality climate can seem like a luxury in the face of the current high stakes assessment climate in which student achievement gains are the paramount consideration, yet the quality of the climate appears to be the single most predictive factor in any school's capacity to promote student achievement.

Teacher-Student Relationship

According to Davis (2003), over the past 20 years, there has been considerable research on how relationships between students and teachers affect the quality of students' motivation and classroom learning experiences. According to Davis, teachers operating as socializing agents, can influence students' social and intellectual experiences. This influence would come via their abilities to instill values in children such as the motivation to learn, by providing classroom contexts that stimulate students' motivation and learning, by addressing students' need to belong, and by serving a regulatory function for the development of emotional, behavioral, and academic skills (Davis, 2006).

According to Sakiz (2007), teacher support is one of the strongest correlates with youth adjustment, social and motivational development, and achievement. Powerful links between teacher support and student emotional, motivational, and academic behaviors develop at very early stages of schooling and persist through adolescence (Turner & Patrick, 2004). What's more is that lack of positive connections between teachers and students is associated with an increase in students' externalizing behaviors such as aggression in elementary classrooms (Silver, Measelle, Armstrong, & Essex, 2010) and risky behaviors, such as stealing, aggression, gang membership, smoking cigarettes, and drinking alcohol in early adolescence, particularly among low socioeconomic groups (Rudasill, Reio, Stipanovic, & Taylor, 2010).

According to Renard and Rogers (1999), students are motivated when they believe that teachers treat them like people and care about them personally and educationally. When teachers apply in the classroom their knowledge of human needs,

amazing things happen. These teachers treat students with respect, offer meaningful, significant choices, create valuable, fun, or interesting learning opportunities, and foster relationships that help students see teachers as teachers and not as dictators, judges, juries, or enemies. The teacher and the students collaborate for high quality learning, and inappropriate behavior becomes a nonissue (Renard & Rogers 1999).

Davis (2006) points out that when students have supportive relationships with teachers these supportive relationships may play an important developmental role during the transition to and through middle school. According to Sakiz (2007), students carefully observe teachers' verbal and nonverbal behaviors and develop self-beliefs and academic behaviors based on these observations. Teacher characteristics such as caring, interest in, respect for, and concern for students are associated with decreased early adolescents' depressive symptoms and increased self-esteem (Reddy, Rhodes, & Mulhall (2003), academic effort and achievement (Goodenow, 1993), pursuit of prosocial and social responsibility goals and academic effort (Wentzel, 1997), and classroom engagement in all grade levels for African-American students (Tucker, Zayco, Herman, Reinke, Trujillo, Carraway, & Wallack, 2002).

Stipek (2006) stated when students have a secure relationship with their teachers, they are more comfortable taking risks that enhance learning, tackling challenging tasks, persisting when they run into difficulty, or asking questions when they are confused. Urban students claim that when a teacher shows genuine concern for them, they feel that they owe the teacher something in return. Students are motivated to achieve because they do not want to disappoint a teacher who cares about them (Davidson, 1999).

According to Davis and Ashley (2003), teachers believe that supportive relationships promote classroom learning and motivation by creating a safe context for students to "open up" and "listen" to the teacher and take intellectual risks. They believed students "worked harder" for teachers they liked and that they could "push" students to do more challenging work when they had a good relationship with them. In this way, many of the teachers in the study found that investing the time to develop supportive relationships with students "paid off" throughout the year by becoming a source of their own motivation to be creative in their instruction, to persist with challenging content, to re-teach units if necessary, and to work through conflict with students (Davis, 2006).

Finn (1989) suggested that the effect of teacher encouragement may be even greater for students whose families are non-encouraging. Having nonencouraging parents and family may lead to student disengagement, withdrawal, and alienation in secondary schools. According to Stipek (2006), young children share their feelings and information about themselves with teachers who are affectionate and nurturing. These close relationships with teachers lead to higher levels of student engagement and achievement (Pianta, 1999).

Renard and Rogers (1999) stated that fostering positive feelings as a motivational strategy in the classroom requires creating a learning context that enables students to value the class activities enough to want to learn and to achieve. Student learning occurs only when what is being presented is meaningful enough to the student that he or she decides to actively engage in the learning experience (Caine & Caine, 1995).

Instructional Delivery

Instructional delivery in the public school classroom and its importance at the highest levels of government is not a new phenomenon. According to Vinovskis (2000), since the mid-19th century, a general consensus has emerged that the federal government should play a key role in collecting, analyzing, and disseminating educational data, as well as exert some responsibility for supporting educational research and development. Today, awareness is growing among the public and policymakers of the need for better research and development to help improve schools.

According to Jablonski (2009), when the subject of instructional delivery arises among teachers, teachers' pedagogical beliefs and research dollars may not be the only concerns. Jablonski suggests that student use of technology is not affected by teachers' pedagogical beliefs, but convenient access to technology and training in technology, may be more important than teachers' pedagogical beliefs when predicting technology use by students. The implications for schools and districts are that resources need to be accessible, and training needs to be pertinent to both the curriculum and the available resources.

Lin and Kinzer (2003) argue that technology, in instructional delivery, can be a valuable aid for making cultural values explicit if properly designed and implemented, because it enables teachers to experience something new and no routine and, therefore, allows them to see their own and students' values and problem-solving processes from new perspectives. In addition, technology can be used to develop rich multimedia cases about students that can be analyzed, reflected upon, and discussed among members of the

community. These cases help teachers examine their students' learning from multiple perspectives (e.g., views from parents, teachers, school administrators, and knowledgeable others—all from different backgrounds). Such cases can also help teachers notice things about their students that might have been overlooked. Teachers then can develop multifaceted professional knowledge about students and their own practice that can be easily shared with others (Lin & Kinzer 2003).

According to Sagan (2010), middle school students often complain that their classes are boring and that the only reason they come to school is to socialize with friends. Many become disengaged from the learning process because they lack interest in school and feel little personal responsibility for their own education. Some cannot envision the long-range positive effects that education produces over time. The use of technology, in instructional delivery, could help middle schools become what Sagan puts forth that they should be; communities of learning by providing a climate that enhances intellectual development with high expectations, and challenges for every student with an integrated curriculum (Sagan, 2010).

According to Lin and Kinzer (2003), there are at least three ways that technology can provide valuable scaffolds for teacher reflection in instructional delivery, particularly about their own and their students' assumptions and values. First, teachers can benefit from experiencing nonroutine practices by using technology artifacts that contradict traditional teaching practices. Second, teachers can learn to understand students from multiple perspectives through the analysis enabled by multimedia-based cases. Third,

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) allows teachers to interact with teachers and students from other schools and cultures.

Parent-Student Relationship

Epstein (2001) suggests that parents who are informed and involved in their children's school can positively affect their child's attitude and performance. According to Finn (1998), until the early 1960s, sociologists believed that school performance and intelligence were immutably connected with socioeconomic status and family structure. However, Finn stated building on the ideas of Benjamin Bloom, Dave (1963) and Wolf (1964) demonstrated that differences in children's performance could be explained instead by specific conditions and parental behaviors, including parents' roles as language models, parents' press for achievement, and provisions for general learning.

According to Sui-Chu and Willms (1996), Lareau (1987) described three conceptual approaches that researchers have used to explain the variation in parental involvement along social-class lines: (a) the culture of poverty, (b) the institutional approach, and (c) the cultural-capital approach. Parental involvement varies, according to Sui-Chu and Willms (1996), because parents of different social classes have different values: Working class parents place less emphasis on the importance of schooling and maintain a greater separation between their roles and those of school staff than do middle-class parents maintain. In the institutional approach, institutions are the source of variation, either because school staffs differ in their ability to involve working class parents or because of subtle discriminatory practices that discourage these parents' participation (Becker & Epstein 1982).

According to Galambos, Barker, and Almeida (2003), several decades of research on parent-child relations brought forth findings that led to the identification of three global, relatively independent dimensions of parental behavior. Those dimensions of parental behavior were (a) support (responsiveness and connectedness to the child), (b) behavioral control (regulation of the child's behavior through firm and consistent discipline), and (c) psychological control (control of the child's behavior through psychological means such as love withdrawal and guilt induction). Parenting exerts an important influence in adolescents' lives and may do so even in the face of potentially negative peer influence. A study examined white, working-to-middle-class families and the relative influence of three parenting behaviors on their sixth grade students. Analyses showed that these parents' firm behavioral control seemed to halt the upward trajectory in externalizing problems among adolescents with deviant peers. Analyses also showed that initial levels of internalizing problems were higher among adolescents with parents who reported lower levels of behavioral control (Galambos, Barker & Almeida, 2003).

Finn (1998) stated that Clark (1983) added significantly to understanding parenting through an intensive study of 10 African-American students from poor homes, half of whom were successful academically and half of whom were not. The researchers discovered that parents of high-achieving students had distinct styles of interacting with their children. Finn stated that these parents created emotionally supportive home environments and provided reassurance when the youngsters encountered failure. Finn, also stated that these parents viewed school performance as being accomplished through

regular practice and work and they accepted responsibility for assisting their children to acquire learning strategies, as well as a general fund of knowledge (Finn, 1998).

Finn (1998) stated that according to U.S. Census data, in 1970, 65% of black families had two parents and that by 1990, the numbers had fallen, leaving only 39% of black families headed by two parents. As a result, the care of black sons has been laid at the feet of their mothers. Finn showed how Census Bureau figures revealed that the percentage had fallen even further by the mid-1990s (Hrabowski III, Maton, & Greif, 1998).

Henderson (1994) examined 66 studies looking for a correlation between parent involvement and student achievement. He found that when parents are involved in their children's education at home, they do better in school. Walberg (1984) concluded after reviewing several studies on learning, that an academically stimulating home is one of the chief determinants of learning. Reynolds (2006) and Clark (1993) concluded that student achievement improves when parents express high, but not unrealistic, expectations for their children's achievement. Research conducted by Steinberg (1996), Eagle (1989), and Epstein (1983) has shown student achievement improves when parents become involved in their children's education at school and in the community.

According to Reynolds (2010), researchers found that educators often assume that Black parents' culture, values and norms do not support or complement the culture of education (Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Noguera, 2003; Yan, 2000; Brown, 2003). Because of this many educators, along with policy-makers, have come to accept the idea that Black parents are more of a deficit to their children's educational

development than an asset. This belief reflects a superficial understanding of the varied contexts in which parents are raising their black sons.

Ford (1993) investigated families of gifted black students and examined home environmental variables and their effects on gifted black students' achievement. Ford provided evidence that despite social hardships and barriers that often limit academic achievement, parents of gifted black students held high aspirations for their children and encouraged them to pursue high levels of education and challenging careers. According to Stevenson, Chen, and Uttal (1990), most black mothers value their children's education, and they encourage them to do well in school. However, too often they bear a disproportionate level of criticism when things go wrong (Brown & Davis, 2000).

Robinson (2012) observed that African-American male students face challenges unique to them as students in U.S. schools at all levels of schooling, by virtue of their social and cultural identity as African-Americans and because of the ways that identity can be a driving force of devaluation in contemporary American society (Perry, Steel, & Hilliard, 2003). The evidence is mixed as to whether general societal racism, inadequate or inappropriate public education policy or school settings, lack of understanding or skills in teachers, poor parenting skills, or lower individual skills of students who are African-American males is the primary "reason" for general poor academic performance for black male students (Robinson, 2012).

Irvine (1990) noted that a crucial role for black parents is their role as teachers in the home. This role as teacher in the home is the role that parents prefer and the one directly related to the achievement of their children. Parental responsiveness (or a related

measure of acceptance, closeness, involvement, relationship quality, or warmth) has a direct positive relation with academic competence (Gray & Steinberg, 1999), adolescents' self-disclosure (Soenens, Vansteenkiste, Luyckx, & Goosens, 2006; Stattin & Kerr, 2000), participation in family activities (Paulson, Hill, & Holmbeck, 1991), psychosocial development (Gray & Steinberg, 1999), and self-esteem (Paulson,Hill, & Holmbeck, 1991).

According to Bogenschneider and Pallock (2008), one of the most important advances of contemporary research on parental influences on child development is the movement away from the simplistic generalizations that frequented the field before the early 1980s to a more nuanced understanding of a reality that is more complex and circumstantial than was originally thought. Despite these advances, we still know less than we could about whether parenting practices have the same effect on every child (Bogenschneider & Pallock, 2008).

Peer-Student Relationship

According to Kiefer and Ellerbrock (2010), the development of healthy student-student relationships and positive perceptions of the peer world can be supported by creating and sustaining a more personalized school environment in which students feel cared for and connected. Educators need to understand students' peer world and the social norms, values, and behaviors that young adolescents may share with their peers (Kiefer & Ellerbrock 2010). Being popular during adolescents is desirable not only because being popular reflects a positive social position based on the collective opinion of the peer group but also because being popular may offer specific provisions such as

access to certain peers and opportunities to develop social competencies unavailable to individuals with lower peer status (Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 2006).

Rubin et al. (2006) goes further to say that given these advantages, adolescents with high social status will want to maintain their status and adolescents with average or low social status will want to ascend their peer hierarchy. According to Bellmore, Villarreal, and Ho (2011), this is important because attaining and maintaining high social status within the peer group is particularly important during early adolescence as concerns over peer evaluations increase and the peer structure changes to a hierarchically organized peer system (Schafer, Korn, Brodbeck, Wolke, & Schulz, 2005).

According to Nelson and DeBacker (2007), research in the area of peer relations pointed to social relationships as possible sources of influence on motivation to learn and influence on classroom climate via the norms that are modeled and valued. Also, research showed that peers also provide information about whether an individual is an accepted and valued member of the class or school community (Goodenow, 1993) and determine whether the classroom feels comfortable and safe (Anderman, 2003). These features of the peer climate influence individual students' psychological sense of belonging.

Researchers such as Battistich, Solomon, Watson, and Schaps (1997) and Roeser, Midgley, and Urdan (1996) found belongingness to be related to academic self-efficacy. According to Anderman (2003), when students feel accepted in their school environment they are more likely to view classrooms as supporting mastery and improvement and to pursue mastery goals. However, in school environments in which students do not feel

comfortable and safe, social comparisons and competition may become more prominent, resulting in the pursuit of performance goals (Anderman & Anderman, 1999).

Nelson and DeBacker (2007) found that classroom norms may be supportive of or oppositional to academic success. That is, norms might encourage involvement in learning activities or discourage behaviors such as completing assignments, seeking good grades, and doing homework (Ryan, 2000). According to Nelson and DeBacker (2007), correlations have been found between the attitudes and behaviors individuals and their friends have for academic aspirations and academic achievement. Moreover, Urdan (1997) reported a positive association between mastery goals and perceptions of close friends' positive orientations toward school, whereas performance-approach goals were related to both positive and negative orientations toward school. Nelson and DeBacker (2007) revealed that Berndt and Keefe (1995) found individuals' disruptive classroom behavior was correlated with the disruptive behavior of their friends.

According to Carlisle (2011), fostering the development of healthy relationships in any school can help build a positive school community where teachers, students, and school staff can work with one another in a culture of learning and affirmation. This focus is especially profound for educators working with adolescent learners in a middle school setting, as many adolescents are turning away from adult role models and are turning solely to their peers for guidance and support, which can undermine the importance of teacher and student relationships (Wigfield, Lutz, & Wagner, 2005).

Figure 1 displays the relationship among the independent and dependent variables of this research.

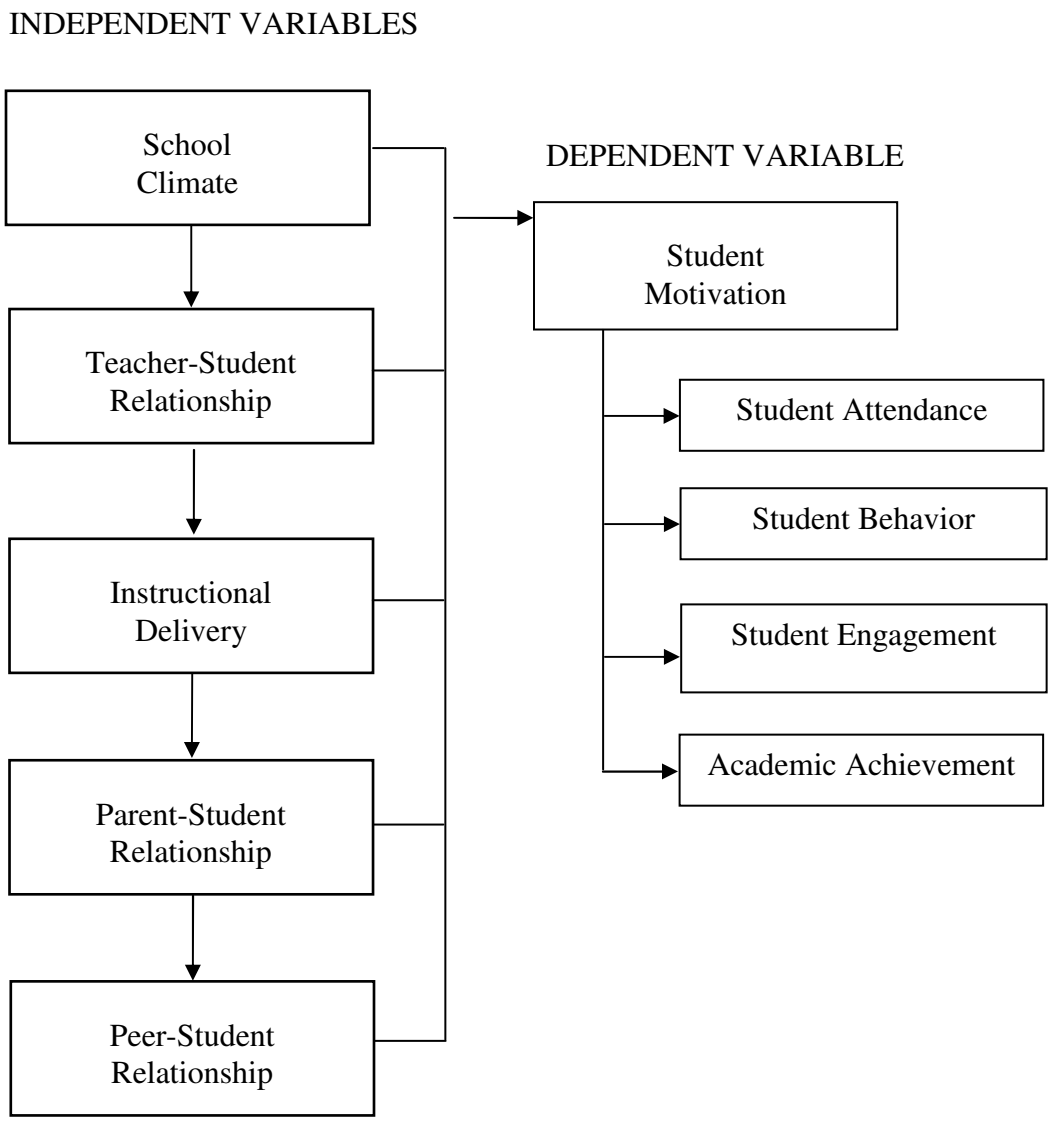

Figure 1: Relationship among the Variables

Summary

The review of literature clearly establishes that there has been a large body of research conducted on the topic of student motivation. The review of literature also establishes that many studies have placed specific emphasis upon the areas of student

attendance, student behavior, student engagement, and student academic achievement as direct outcomes of positive levels of student motivation. Additionally, the literature review also clearly establishes that the independent variables identified as school climate, teacher-student relationships, parent-student relationships, and peer-student relationships, have been researched in many studies and have proven to be influencers on middle school students academic achievement.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Martin and Dowson (2009) argued that achievement motivation theory, and educational practice can be conceptualized in relational terms. Relatedness affects individuals' motivation and behavior by way of positive influences on other self-processes relevant to achievement motivation. According to Martin and Dowson, in the context of a student's life, positive emotional attachments to peers, teachers, and parents promote not only healthy social, emotional, and intellectual functioning but also positive feelings of self-worth and self-esteem (Connell & Wellborn, 1991). This is important because self-worth and self-esteem are both related to sustained achievement motivation as established by Covington (2002) and Thompson (1994).

Now, over three decades since Albert Bandura (1977) theorized that the beliefs that people hold about their capabilities and about the outcomes of their efforts powerfully influence the ways in which they behave. Bandura's theory of self-efficacy has also been shown to predict students' college major and career (Martin & Dowson, 2009). According to Bandura's (1986, 1997) social cognitive theory, these self-efficacy beliefs help determine the choices people make, the effort they put forth, the persistence and perseverance they display in the face of difficulties, and the degree of anxiety or serenity they experience as they engage the myriad tasks that comprise their life. Self-efficacy has received ample attention in educational research, where self-efficacy has

been shown to predict students' academic achievement across academic areas and levels (Pajares & Urdan, 2006).

According to Martin and Dowson (2009), Bandura hypothesized that self-efficacy beliefs are created and developed as students interpret information from four sources. The most powerful of which is the interpreted result of their own previous attainments, or mastery experience. After students complete an academic task, they interpret and evaluate the results obtained, and judgments of competence are created or revised according to those interpretations. When they believe that their efforts have been successful, their confidence to accomplish similar or related tasks is raised; when they believe that their efforts failed to produce the effect desired, confidence to succeed in similar endeavors is diminished. Experienced mastery in a domain often has enduring effects on one's self-efficacy.

Jackson (2002) found that individuals who believe that they can successfully complete a task, having high self-efficacy, are apt to perform better than those who lack this level of belief. For Example, Martin and Dowson (2009) noted Bandura (1986, 1997) found that students who earned top marks in science throughout school will typically believe themselves capable in this area for years to come.

According to Griffin (1997), Mead (1934), and Blumer (1969) were important figures in the development of sociological psychology. Griffin, (1997) stated that Blumer's Symbolic Interaction theory focused on the ways that individuals relate to and are affected by social structures. The name of this theory comes from the fact that the theory studies the symbolic (or subjective) meaning of human interaction (Griffin, 1997).

The symbolic interaction framework developed by Blumer (1969), according to Griffin, (1997), was built upon three core principles. The core principles were meaning, language, and thought. These core principles lead to conclusions about the creation of a person's self and socialization into a larger community (Griffin, 1997). According to Griffin, the first core principle of meaning stated that humans act toward people and things based upon the meanings that they have given to those people or things. Symbolic Interactionism holds the principal of meaning as central in human behavior. According to Griffin, the second core principle is language. In Symbolic Interactionism, language gives humans a means by which to negotiate meaning through symbols.

Griffin (1997) believed that Herbert Mead's influence on Blumer became apparent here the second core principle because Mead believed that naming something assigned meaning, thus naming was the basis for human society and the extent of knowledge. Griffin stated that Mead believed that by engaging in speech acts with others, *symbolic interaction,* that humans come to identify meaning, or naming, and develop discourse. The third core principle of Symbolic Interactionism, according to Griffin, is that of thought. Thought modifies each individual's interpretation of symbols. Thought, based on language, is a mental conversation or dialogue that requires role taking, or imagining different points of view (Griffin, 1997).

Finally, according to Martin and Dowson (2009), Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) is among the most explicit in recognition of relatedness as a fundamental ingredient of motivation. Self-Determination Theory proposes that for one to be motivated and to function at optimal level, a set of psychological needs must be

supported (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Reeve, Deci, & Ryan, 2004). These needs are relatedness, competence, and autonomy. Relatedness refers to the connection and sense of belonging with others. This connectedness and belonging provides the required emotional security that individuals need to actively explore and effectively deal with their worlds.

According to Martin and Dowson (2009), from a learning perspective, a strong sense of relatedness better positions students to take on challenges, set positive goals, and establish high expectations that extend and motivate them. Moreover, Martin and Dowson stated that relatedness needs constitute a motivating force for internalizing social regulations and adapting to interpersonal circumstances (La Guardia & Ryan, 2002). Martin and Dowson (2009) also stated that in turn, meeting these relatedness needs is likely to enable students to negotiate the affective and social world of the classroom and school, and this enhanced affective and social integration interfaces with enhanced motivational processes (Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Weissberg, Resnik, Payton, & O'Brien, 2003; Wentzel, Barry, & Waldwell, 2004). For example, quality relatedness with parents also predicts quality relatedness with teachers, to the extent that home and school expectations and goals are aligned. Children who are more warmly involved with their parents, experience better academic functioning in class and children with a heightened sense of relatedness with parents are more engaged at school and display higher self-esteem while at school (Avery & Ryan, 1988; Ryan, Stiller, & Lynch, 1994).

Relationship of Study Variables and Theoretical Framework

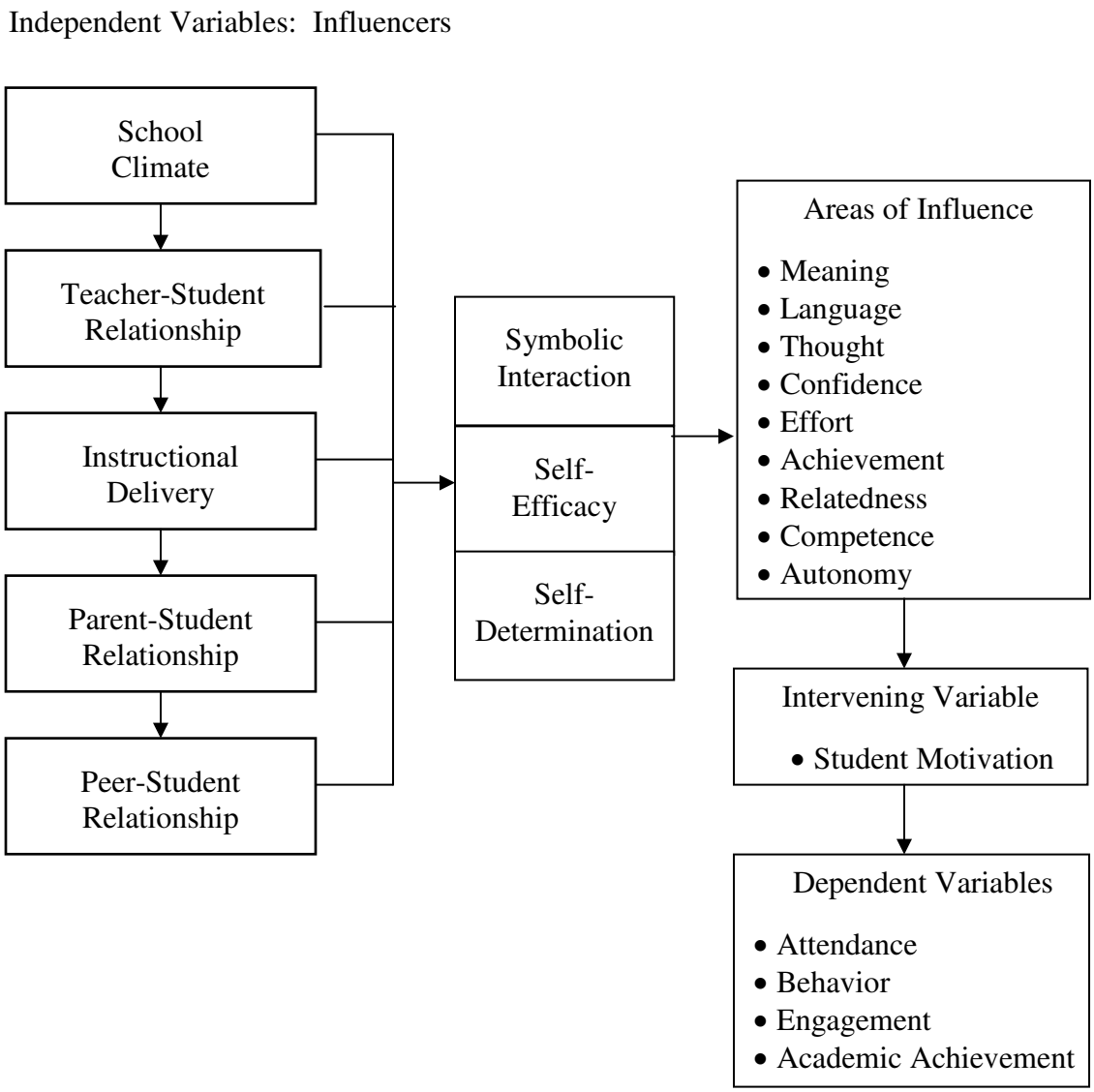

Figure 2: The Theoretical Framework

Research Variables

School Climate

For the purpose of this study, school climate refers to the extent to which students understand the principal's expectations of their relationship to the school and the student's perception of their school being supportive, encouraging, safe and expectant of success.

Teacher-Student Relationship

For the purpose of this study, teacher-student relations refer to the extent to which students understand the expectations of their relationship to the teacher and the student's perception of being important to the teachers, their ability to get along with teachers, teachers concern about their academics and teachers personal encouragement to uphold academic legacy.

Instructional Delivery

For the purpose of this study, instructional delivery refer to the extent to which students understand the expectations of their use of technology in class, prefer using technology in class, feel stimulated when using technology, perceive attitudes around them about using technology, and their comfort using technology.

Parent-Student Relationship

For the purpose of this study, parent-student relations refer to the extent to which students understand the expectations of their relationship to their parent(s) and the student's perception of feeling supported by my parent(s), their ability to get along with

parent(s), parent(s) concern about their academics and parent(s) expectations to uphold academic legacy.

Peer-Student Relationship

For the purpose of this study, peer-student relations refer to the extent to which students understand the expectations of their relationship to other students and the student's perception of feeling accepted by peer(s), peer(s) concern about their grades, their ability to get along with peer(s) at school and peer(s) expectations to uphold the school's academic legacy.

Student Motivation

For the purpose of this study, student motivation refers to the extent to which the student meets the attendance, behavior, engagement and academic achievement expectations of the school.

Student Attendance

For the purpose of this study, student attendance refers to the extent to which the student attends school regularly, classes regularly, school frequently, and class frequently.

Student Behavior

For the purpose of this study, student behavior refers to the extent to which student has good behavior at school, is cordial towards teacher(s) and has good behavior in all classes.

Student Engagement

For the purpose of this study, student engagement refers to the extent to which the student pay attention in class, participate in class, work to achieve in class and participate in extracurricular activities.

Student Academic Achievement

For the purpose of this study, student academic achievement refers to the extent to which the student makes good grades, with teachers perceived as good teachers or bad teachers by the student and the extent to which the student is aware of the academic traditions and legacies of the school.

Research Questions

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student attendance and school climate?

RQ 2: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student attendance and teacher-student relationship?

RQ 3: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student attendance and Instructional Delivery?

RQ 4: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student attendance and parent-student relationship?

RQ 5: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student attendance and peer-student relationship?

RQ 6: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student behavior and school climate?

RQ 7: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student behavior and teacher-student relationship?

RQ 8: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student behavior and Instructional Delivery?

RQ 9: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student behavior and parent-student relationship?

RQ10: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student behavior and peer-student relationship?

RQ11: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student engagement and school climate?

RQ 12: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student engagement and teacher-student relationship?

RQ 13: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student engagement and Instructional Delivery?

RQ 14: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student engagement and parent-student relationship?

RQ 15: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student engagement and peer-student relationship?

RQ 16: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student academic achievement and school climate?

RQ 17: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student academic achievement and teacher-student relationship?

RQ 18: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student academic achievement and Instructional Delivery?

RQ 19: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student academic achievement and parent-student relationship?

RQ 20: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student academic achievement and peer-student relationship?

Summary

This study theorizes that student motivation is influenced by the independent variables school climate, teacher-student relationships, parent-student relationships, and peer-student relationships. This study theorizes that these variables can ultimately lead to academic achievement in African-American males students in an urban middle school. A configuration of the variables is provided in Figure 1 for the purpose of clarifying terms.

Further, for guiding this research study, a combination of the Self-Efficacy Theory developed by Bandura (1977), Symbolic Interaction framework developed by Blumer (1969), and Self-Determination Theory developed by Deci and Ryan (1985) were used to undergird and frame the research findings. A configuration of the theoretical framework and the variables is provided in Figure 2 for clarifying relationships among variables and frameworks.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study was a mixed methods design. Initially, the researcher chose a quantitative, descriptive design, which consisted of an analysis of variables affecting overall student motivation operationalized as Student Attendance, Student Behavior, Student Engagement, and Academic Achievement of eighth grade students. African-American male students were isolated to analyze relationships among variables. However, after receiving comments from the respondents that brought even more clarity to the study, a qualitative design was included in the study. In this study, the researcher investigated correlation relationships among variables using 300 research subjects. The researcher used a quantitative design to investigate correlations between the independent variables used in this study to explore eighth grade male students' perceptions of influencers on their motivation, which were school climate, teacher-student relations, parent-student relations, and peer-student relations and their impact on the dependent variable student motivation.

Description of the Setting

The study took place in two urban middle schools in a large urban public school system in the state of Georgia and in a private middle school in the same county. The

study took place in two urban middle schools in a large urban public school system in the state of Georgia and in a private middle school in the same county.

Approximately 55% of the entire body of students were black, 28% were white, 10% were Hispanic, almost 2% were Asian, a little over 1 % was American Indian, and 3% were other. These sites were selected for this study for three reasons. In the first, the researcher has lived in the county, served its residents, and has witnessed the struggles to improve academic and social wellbeing of students, particularly African-American male students. Secondly, the selected schools have visionary leaders who are interested in eighth graders' motivation, attendance, behavior, engagement in the classroom and academic achievement. Thirdly, the schools are interested in identifying critical variables that affect eighth graders' school outcomes.

In addition, the eighth grade students in this county are transitioning to high school where students who have failed to navigate middle school successfully are, at the least, risks for poor academic achievement and at the worst, risks for school dropout.

Sampling Procedures

In compliance with the school district's policy, the researcher obtained permission from the board of education, the school principal, parents' permission and students' approval prior to the students participating in the study. Given that, the study focused on eighth graders' perceptions of their academic motivators and particularly African-American male students' perceptions of the same a combination of quota and purposive sampling technique were used.

Purposive sampling was used by the researcher to access a particular subset of students with the possibility of different perspectives colored by their academic abilities, extracurricular involvement and different socioeconomic backgrounds. The researcher used quota sampling because there was a specific proportion of African-American males needed within the overall population of 300 students to ensure that the group was proportionately represented.

For this study, the sample for the survey consisted of a cohort of male and female students. The researcher used 300 students in the study who were identified by their teachers as tracked from the seventh grade to the eighth grade. The sample population for the study was selected from all those students tracked from the seventh grade to the eighth grade by math and English teachers. Generally, seventh and eighth grades are not departmentalized; therefore, there was more than one person designated as the math or English teacher for each grade. For this study, the researcher felt no need for any other specific criteria or safeguarding restrictions to be used in selecting the sample participants. The researcher's expectation was that data from all submitted surveys would be used, but some surveys, roughly 10 to 15, were not completed or numbered properly to be used.

Working with Human Subjects

In this study, all 300 names and identities of the student subjects along with their schools will remain anonymous. All human subjects were identified by coded identification numbers. In addition, the researcher gained permission to include students in the study by seeking valid consent, which was granted by parents or legal guardians for

students to participate in the study through signed consent forms. The consent forms were sent home to parents and legal guardians through the school.

Instrumentation

The researcher designed a questionnaire containing 57 questions along with comments with the assistance of dissertation committee advisor, Dr. Trevor Turner and Dr. Robert Waymer, dissertation committee member and faculty in the Whitney M. Young School of Social work at Clark Atlanta University. The variables under investigation in this study are defined based on data from review of literature, and other surveys in the field of educational leadership relating to student motivation, student attendance, student behavior, student engagement, student academic achievement as well as school climate, teacher-student relationships, parent-student relationships, peer-student relationships, and instructional delivery. Questions developed for each aspect of the independent and dependent variables were measured by respondents' perceptions as stated on the questionnaire.

The design of the questionnaire is as follows: All questions are answered on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). Student demographics are measured by items 1-15; the dependent variables that are operationalized as Student Motivation towards Attendance, measured by items 16-19; Student Motivation towards Behavior, measured by items 20-23; Student Motivation towards Academic Engagement, measured by items 24 -27; Student Motivation towards Academic Achievement, measured by items 28-32. The researcher used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to validate the use of the 17 items on the

questionnaire to test the dependent variable. The Cronbach Alpha was used to test the reliability of the 17 items of the dependent variable. The Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficients indicated a composite of the four independent variables to be reliable at .736.

Items 33-39 measure student perceptions of school climate; items 40-43 measure student perceptions of Teacher-Student Relationships; items 44-47 measure student perceptions of Parent-Student Relationships; items 48-51 measure student perceptions of Peer-Student Relationships, and items 52-57 measure student perceptions of teacher instructional delivery through technology. The Cronbach Alpha was used to test the reliability of the 25 items of the dependent variable. The Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficients indicated a composite of the five dependent variables to be reliable at .879.

Beyond the reliability procedure, research questions were tested using the Pearson Correlation. The instrument measured for construct validity using each item to scale correlation process. Each item in the variable correlated with the overall score of the variable.

Data Collection Procedures

Upon assessing the schools district, the researcher identified middle school principals willing to participate in the study who later had math, or reading teachers to administer the questionnaires to their students. Teachers were asked to explain the purpose of the study, the anonymity of responses, the anonymity of participants and the agreement of voluntary participation. The participants completed the questionnaires individually within 15 minutes. Upon completion, the students returned the

questionnaires to their teachers who then placed the questionnaires in a box (provided by the researcher) at the front desk.

The demographic information, independent variables, and dependent variables were obtained through questionnaires administered to 300 eighth graders at selected middle schools. The researcher recorded each participant's response to the questionnaire. To ensure confidentiality and allow the matching of individual participant's questionnaire results with his or her responses, the researcher assigned numbers (001 to 300) to the identified participants. In addition, to assist with school pool, a number specifically assigned to the respondents' school, -1, -2, or -3, was also noted on the participant's questionnaire.

The researcher anticipated data from 30% of the returned student questionnaires; roughly, 75 to 100 surveys would be received, collected and tabulated in a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program to determine the significance between the dependent variable and the selected independent variables. With the assistance of the middle school principals, over 90% of the surveys were received, collected and tabulated in the SPSS to determine the significance between the dependent variable and the selected independent variables.

Data from the 300 questionnaires were subjected to Pearson Correlation analysis to determine the level of significance of the relationship between the dependent variable student motivation operationalized by the dependent variables attendance, behavior, engagement, and academic achievement and the selected independent variables, school

climate, teacher-student relations, parent-student relations, and peer-student relations. The researcher used a level of significance for data analysis of 0.5.

Statistical Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data that were collected in this study. The following statistical procedures were used: means and standard deviation were used to demonstrate that each variable had enough distinction to allow for correlation analysis. Other procedures used include Pearson Correlation analysis, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) analysis, and Regression analysis.

The Pearson Correlation procedure tests whether there is a direct relationship between variables. Values of the correlation coefficient range from –1 to 1. The sign of the coefficient indicates the direction of the relationship and its absolute value indicates the strength, with larger absolute values indicating stronger relationships.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine if there were differences in students perceptions based upon ethnicity, and if there exist a relationship between students' perceptions as it relates to the dependent variables: student attendance, student behavior, student engagement, and student academic achievement. Analysis was also conducted to see if there existed a relationship between students' perceptions as it relates to the independent variables: school climate, teacher-student relationships, instructional delivery, parent-student relationships and peer student relationships. The *t*-test was used to test the difference between two means (two groups) to determine if they are significantly different. A factor analysis loads in one component or factor the

variables that are highly related among them when interacting together, and as a set, they are independent of the other components.

A Regression analysis was used to estimate which independent variable makes the most contribution or impact on the dependent variable while controlling for the other variables. The level of significance adopted for this study is the .05 alpha level. The study had a sample size of 300 middle school students out of 1,600 total middle school students from three middle schools.

Limitations of the Study

The following are limitations noted by the researcher of this study, which may have affected the findings:

1. The researcher recognizes that there are other variables beyond the scope of this study, which may influence student motivation towards academic achievement.
2. Although a minimum sample size of 75 African-American male students was required for statistical analysis, the current 300 total sample size has its limitations in that a larger and more racially diverse sample would allow for a more comprehensive analysis.
3. The study did not provide empirical data on attendance.
4. The study did not provide empirical data on the CRCT.
5. The study had no pretest and posttest to control the study group.
6. The study was powerless to control student responses of the survey who may want their parents to appear supportive.

7. Because the survey is self-reported, the data related to CRCT Math scores may be flawed.
8. Because the survey is self-reported, the data related to CRCT English scores may be flawed.
9. Because the survey is self-reported, the data related to CRCT Reading scores may be flawed.
10. Further, some teachers may refer students to the office frequently due to their lack of adequate classroom management skills.
11. The survey distributed to educational leaders, in the school before being administered to students in class of their choice.
12. The study survey may have encountered leaders and staff who encouraged students to give the school or teachers favorable responses to bolster appearances.
13. The study participants may have decided to answer survey questions untruthfully.
14. The administration of the survey was conducted by school administrators who may have specially selected students as respondents.
15. The data pointing to the independent and dependent variables represented by the participants' perceptions which may be flawed, as the researcher has no control over respondents transparency in answering questions.

Summary

This study theorizes that student motivation is influenced by the independent variables school climate, teacher-student relationships, parent-student relationships, and peer-student relationships. This study theorizes that these variables can ultimately lead to academic achievement in African-American males students in an urban middle school. A configuration of the variables is provided in Figure 2 (Chapter III) for the purpose of clarifying terms.

Further, for guiding this research study, a combination of the Self-Efficacy Theory developed by Bandura (1977), Symbolic Interaction framework developed by Blumer (1969), and Self-Determination Theory developed by Deci and Ryan (1985) was used to undergird and frame the research findings. A configuration of the theoretical framework and the variables is provided in Figure 3 (Chapter III) for clarifying relationships among variables and frameworks.

CHAPTER V

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the study, describes and explains the perceptions of middle school students as it relates to the influence of the school environment, teacher-student relations, instructional delivery, parent-student relations, and peer-student relations upon student attendance, behavior, engagement and overall student academic achievement. The findings are organized into three sections: demographic data, data analysis and research questions with hypotheses.

Demographic Data

This section provides a profile of the study respondents. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the following: gender, age, ethnicity, and education level of parents, employment status of parents, respondents' knowledge of parents' current education, employment status, extracurricular involvement, and different socioeconomic backgrounds. A target population for the research was composed of middle school students recently promoted to the eighth grade. This was important because the National Center for Education Statistics data over the past decade revealed that a majority of African-American males in grades 4, 8, and 12 did not reach grade level proficiency in key subject areas such as reading, mathematics, history, and science.

As indicated in Table 1, the typical respondent of the study was an African-American, 13 years of age, in the eighth grade. The respondents in the study most said they met, but did not exceed the CRCT reading (40.7%), English 40.3%, and math 46.3% scores. As it relates to extracurricular activities, 46% of respondents participated in some type of school sports; well over half, 80% of the respondents wanted to participate in some type of school sports. As it relates to school clubs, 35% of respondents said they participate in some type of school club, while well over half, 64% of the respondents, said that they did not participate in some type of school club. Also, 33% of the respondents said that their father was a college graduate, and 47% of the respondents said that their mother was a college graduate. Finally, 59% of the respondents said that their fathers were employed; 18% said that their father owned a business, 65% of the respondents said that their mother was employed, and 11% noted that their mother was a business owner.

Table 1

Demographic Profile of Study Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	153	51.0
Female	147	49.0
Ethnicity		
Black	166	55.3
White	84	28.0
Latino	31	10.3

Table 1 (continued)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Asian	5	1.7
American Indian	4	1.3
Other	10	3.3
Age		
12	1	.3
13	227	75.7
14	67	22.3
15	5	1.7
Grade		
7	1	.3
8	299	99.7
CRCT Reading Score		
Does Not Meet	1	.3
Meets	122	40.7
Exceeds	95	31.7
Exempt	82	27.3
CRCT English Score		
Does Not Meet	6	2.0
Meets	121	40.3
Exceeds	91	30.3
Exempt	82	27.3
CRCT Math Score		
Does Not Meet	22	7.3
Meets	139	46.3
Exceeds	57	19.0
Exempt	82	27.3

Table 1 (continued)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
I participate in school sponsored sports.		
No	162	54.0
Yes	138	46.0
I would like to participate in school sponsored sports.		
No	59	19.7
Yes	241	80.3
I participate in school sponsored clubs.		
No	194	64.7
Yes	106	35.5
I would like to participate in school sponsored clubs.		
No	149	49.7
Yes	151	50.3
Father's Educational Level		
Elementary School	3	1.0
Middle School	8	2.7
Some High School	15	5.0
High School	45	15.0
Graduate/GED	0	0
Technical School	5	1.7
Some College	29	9.7
College Graduate	99	33.0
Don't Know	96	32.0

Table 1 (continued)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Mother's Educational Level		
Elementary School	2	.7
Middle School	5	1.7
Some High School	13	4.3
High School	29	9.7
Graduate/GED	0	0
Technical School	4	1.3
Some College	42	14.0
College Graduate	143	47.7
Don't Know	62	20.7
Father's Employment Status		
Business Owner	56	18.7
Employed	179	59.7
Unemployed	8	2.7
Retired	5	1.7
On Disability	9	3.0
Don't Know	43	14.3
Mother's Employment Status		
Business Owner	35	11.7
Employed	195	65
Unemployed	29	9.7
Retired	6	2.0
On Disability	6	2.0
Don't Know	29	9.7

As indicated in Tables 2-5, the respondents of the study had very strong viewpoints as it related to the dependent variables. As for attendance, 79% of the respondents in the study most said they attend school regularly as well as attend class regularly. As for behavior, 90% of the respondents agreed that good behavior was important in school, with teachers and in classes. As for engagement in and out of the classroom, 90% of respondents reported that they pay attention, participated and worked hard in class. Achievement was also very important to respondents as roughly 90% reported that they compete to make good grades in class. What was telling in the area of achievement was that 90% of respondents believed that they made good grades with good teachers as opposed to 57% of respondents who disagreed with the probability of making good grades with bad teachers. Finally, while roughly 83% of respondents are aware of their schools achievements in sports, only 63% are aware of their school's strong academic history. Respondents are clearly motivated towards academic achievement.

Table 2

Frequencies of Questions - Dependent Variable: Attendance

Statements		Frequency	Percent
16. I attend school regularly			
Valid	Strongly Disagree	8	2.7
	Disagree	1	.3
	Agree	52	17.3
	Strongly Agree	239	79.7
	Total	300	100.0

Table 2 (continued)

Statements			Frequency	Percent
17.	I attend all of my classes regularly.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	9	3.0
		Disagree	3	1.0
		Agree	49	16.3
		Strongly Agree	239	79.7
		Total	300	100.0
18.	I am tardy to school regularly			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	197	65.7
		Disagree	72	24.0
		Agree	15	5.0
		Strongly Agree	16	5.3
		Total	300	100.0
19.	I am absent from class regularly.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	213	71.0
		Disagree	58	19.3
		Agree	17	5.7
		Strongly Agree	12	4.0
		Total	300	100.0

Table 3

Frequencies of Questions - Dependent Variable: Behavior

Statements			Frequency	Percent
20.	Being on good behavior helps me at school.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	9	3.0
		Disagree	14	4.7
		Agree	128	42.7
		Strongly Agree	149	49.7
		Total	300	100.0
21.	Being cordial towards teachers helps me at school.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	11	3.7
		Disagree	16	5.3
		Agree	139	46.3
		Strongly Agree	134	44.7
		Total	300	100.0
22.	I have good behavior at school.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	7	2.3
		Disagree	12	4.0
		Agree	131	43.7
		Strongly Agree	150	50.0
		Total	300	100.0
23.	I have good behavior in all of my classes.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	8	2.7
		Disagree	30	10.0
		Agree	140	46.7
		Strongly Agree	122	40.7
		Total	300	100.0

Table 4

Frequencies of Questions - Dependent Variable: Engagement

Statements			Frequency	Percent
24.	I pay attention in my classes.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	6	2.0
		Disagree	23	7.7
		Agree	164	54.7
		Strongly Agree	107	35.7
		Total	300	100.0
25.	I participate in my classes.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	6	2.0
		Disagree	15	5.0
		Agree	150	50.0
		Strongly Agree	129	43.0
		Total	300	100.0
26.	I work hard to achieve in class.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	6	2.0
		Disagree	16	5.3
		Agree	121	40.3
		Strongly Agree	157	52.3
		Total	300	100.0
27.	I participate in extra-curricular activities.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	21	7.0
		Disagree	63	21.0
		Agree	92	30.7
		Strongly Agree	124	41.3
		Total	300	100.0

Table 5

Frequencies of Questions - Dependent Variable: Achievement

Statements			Frequency	Percent
28.	I compete to make good grades.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	15	5.0
		Disagree	47	15.7
		Agree	129	43.0
		Strongly Agree	109	36.3
		Total	300	100.0
29.	I make good grades with good teachers.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	6	2.0
		Disagree	24	8.0
		Agree	117	39.0
		Strongly Agree	153	51.0
		Total	300	100.0
30.	I make good grades with bad teachers.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	90	30.0
		Disagree	82	27.3
		Agree	89	29.7
		Strongly Agree	39	13.0
		Total	300	100.0
31.	I am aware of my school's strong academic history.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	45	15.0
		Disagree	67	22.3
		Agree	102	34.0
		Strongly Agree	86	28.7
		Total	300	100.0

Table 5 (continued)

Statements		Frequency	Percent
32. I am aware of my school's achievements in Sports.			
Valid	Strongly Disagree	21	7.0
	Disagree	31	10.3
	Agree	84	28.0
	Strongly Agree	164	54.7
	Total	300	100.0

As indicated in Table 6, the respondents are aware of schools climate. Seventy-three percent of the respondents in the study reported that their school was supportive; 70% of the respondents felt that their schools' mood was encouraging. Interestingly, when asked if their school made them feel like a winner, 45% disagreed while 44% agreed that their school did make them feel like a winner. Finally, 82% agreed that their school wanted them to uphold a legacy of winning in sports, while 84% agreed that their school expected them to uphold a legacy of winning in academics.

Table 6

Frequencies of Questions -Independent Variable: School Climate

Statements		Frequency	Percent
33. My school is very supportive.			
Valid	Strongly Disagree	23	7.7
	Disagree	57	19.0
	Agree	134	44.7
	Strongly Agree	86	28.7
	Total	300	100.0

Table 6 (continued)

Statements			Frequency	Percent
34.	The mood at my school is encouraging.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	26	8.7
		Disagree	60	20.0
		Agree	149	49.7
		Strongly Agree	65	21.7
		Total	300	100.0
35.	My school makes you feel like a winner.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	46	15.3
		Disagree	91	30.3
		Agree	118	39.3
		Strongly Agree	45	15.0
		Total	300	100.0
36.	My school expects students to uphold a legacy of winning in sports.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	16	5.3
		Disagree	37	12.3
		Agree	122	40.7
		Strongly Agree	125	41.7
		Total	300	100.0
37.	My school expects students to keep the classroom environment safe.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	15	5.0
		Disagree	15	5.0
		Agree	101	33.7
		Strongly Agree	169	56.3
		Total	300	100.0

Table 6 (continued)

Statements		Frequency	Percent
38. My school expects to uphold a legacy of winning in academics.			
Valid	Strongly Disagree	20	6.7
	Disagree	26	8.7
	Agree	122	40.7
	Strongly Agree	132	44.0
	Total	300*	100.0
39. My school expects students to keep the school environment safe.			
Valid	Strongly Disagree	14	4.7
	Disagree	19	6.3
	Agree	106	35.3
	Strongly Agree	161	53.7
	Total	300	100.0

As indicated in Tables 7-9, in terms of teacher-student relationships, 35% of respondents feel that they are not important to teachers, although 75% of respondents feel that the teachers are concerned about their academic progress. When it comes to parent-student relationships, 93% of the respondents feel supported by their parents, 90% of the respondents feel that their parents are concerned about their grades, and 85% of the respondents believe that their parents expect them to uphold the school's academic legacy. Respondents had mixed perspectives of peer-student relationships. Although 83% of respondents feel accepted by their peers, 64% of respondents do not feel that their peers are concerned about their grades. In addition, 52% of respondents disagree that their peers expect them to uphold their schools academic legacy.

Table 7

Frequencies of Questions - Independent Variable: Teacher-Student Relations

Statements			Frequency	Percent
40.	The teachers and students get along at my school.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	38	12.7
		Disagree	87	29.0
		Agree	126	42.0
		Strongly Agree	49	16.3
		Total	300	100.0
41.	I feel important to my teachers.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	42	14.0
		Disagree	65	21.7
		Agree	136	45.3
		Strongly Agree	56	18.7
		Total	300	100.0
42.	My teachers are concerned about by academics.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	28	9.3
		Disagree	45	15.0
		Agree	115	38.3
		Strongly Agree	112	37.3
		Total	300	100.0
43.	My teachers encourage me to uphold our school's academic legacy.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	24	8.0
		Disagree	47	15.7
		Agree	123	41.0
		Strongly Agree	106	35.3
		Total	300	100.0

Table 8

Frequencies of Questions - Independent Variable: Parent-Student Relations

	Statements		Frequency	Percent
44.	I feel supported by my parents.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	9	3.0
		Disagree	12	4.0
		Agree	50	16.7
		Strongly Agree	229	76.3
		Total	300	100.0
45.	The parents and students get along good at my school.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	14	4.7
		Disagree	30	10.0
		Agree	144	48.0
		Strongly Agree	112	37.3
		Total	300	100.0
46.	My parents are concerned about my grades.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	16	5.3
		Disagree	14	4.7
		Agree	51	17.0
		Strongly Agree	219	73.0
		Total	300	100.0
47.	My parents expect me to uphold our school's academic legacy.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	20	6.7
		Disagree	24	8.0
		Agree	85	28.3
		Strongly Agree	171	57.0
		Total	300	100.0

Table 9

Frequencies of Questions - Independent Variable: Peer-Student Relations

Statements			Frequency	Percent
48.	I feel accepted by my peers.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	18	6.0
		Disagree	33	11.0
		Agree	109	36.3
		Strongly Agree	140	46.7
		Total	300	100.0
49.	My peers are concerned about my grades.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	101	33.7
		Disagree	91	30.3
		Agree	75	25.0
		Strongly Agree	33	11.0
		Total	300	100.0
50.	The students are good together at my school.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	41	13.7
		Disagree	65	21.7
		Agree	135	45.0
		Strongly Agree	59	19.7
		Total	300	100.0
51.	My peers expect me to uphold our school's academic legacy.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	72	24.0
		Disagree	85	28.3
		Agree	81	27.0
		Strongly Agree	62	20.7
		Total	300	100.0

The researcher observed that Instructional Delivery by means of technology was significant to the respondents. The study showed that 88% of respondents want their teacher to use more technology. The study also showed that 89% of respondents enjoy learning new things in class via technology. When it comes to using technology to learn in the classroom, almost 93% of respondents would like to use laptops, iPads, iPhones, and other technology. Table 10 shows that 83% of respondents feel stimulated when using technology in class for instruction. Respondents also see teachers using technology in the classroom as positive. Some 82% of respondents feel that their teachers have a positive attitude about using technology as a tool to teach with. When asked, 77% of respondents felt that their teachers are comfortable using technology to teach.

Table 10

Frequencies of Questions - Independent Variable: Instructional Delivery

Statements		Frequency	Percent
52. I want my teacher to use more technology when teaching.			
Valid	Strongly Disagree	12	4.0
	Disagree	23	7.7
	Agree	73	24.3
	Strongly Agree	192	64.0
	Total	300	100.0
53. I enjoy technology in class to learn new things.			
Valid	Strongly Disagree	15	5.0
	Disagree	16	5.3
	Agree	62	20.7
	Strongly Agree	207	69.0
	Total	300	100.0

Table 10 (continued)

Statements			Frequency	Percent
54.	I prefer using my laptop, ipad, iphone, and other technology to learn in class.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	11	3.7
		Disagree	11	3.7
		Agree	57	19.0
		Strongly Agree	221	73.7
		Total	300	100.0
55.	I feel stimulated when using technology in class for instruction.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	21	7.0
		Disagree	29	9.7
		Agree	91	30.3
		Strongly Agree	159	53.0
		Total	300	100.0
56.	My teachers have positive attitudes about using technology to teach with.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	29	9.7
		Disagree	53	17.7
		Agree	121	40.3
		Strongly Agree	97	32.3
		Total	300	100.0
57.	My teachers are comfortable using technology to teach with.			
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	23	7.7
		Disagree	44	14.7
		Agree	129	43.0
		Strongly Agree	104	34.7
		Total	300	100.0

Data Analysis

The purpose of this study was to investigate the potential influence of the school environment, teacher-student relations, instructional delivery, parent-student relations and peer-student relations upon student motivation, which is operationalized as student attendance, student behavior, student engagement and student academic achievement.

The influence of students' perceptions of school environment, teacher-student relations, instructional delivery, parent-student relations and peer-student relations can have a profound effect on the student as well as others in the academic environment. Accordingly, the data are analyzed in relation to the conceptual framework and diagram (see Figure 2, Chapter III), and in response to the research questions. The dependent variables are student attendance, student behavior, student engagement and academic achievement. The results of Pearson Correlation and other analysis are presented in relation to demographics, school environment, teacher-student relations, instructional delivery, parent-student relations and peer-student relations.

With the exception of student attendance, Instructional Delivery by means of technology was significantly related to all of the dependent variables pointing toward student motivation operationalized as student behavior, student engagement, and student achievement. In addition, Instructional Delivery by means of technology was significantly related to all of the independent variables such as school climate, teacher-student relationships, parent-student relationships, and peer-student relationships.

Tables 11 through 15 show the correlation of CRCT scores with dependent variables

and independent Variables, mean scores of variables and correlations of demographics and CRCT scores.

Table 11

Correlation of CRCT Scores with Dependent Variables

		Pearson Correlations			
		CRCT Reading Score	CRCT English Score	CRCT Math Score	Student Attendance
CRCT Reading Score	Pearson Correlation	1	.544**	.406**	.065
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.340
	N	218	218	218	218
CRCT English Score	Pearson Correlation	.544**	1	.473**	-.014
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.835
	N	218	218	218	218
CRCT Math Score	Pearson Correlation	.406**	.473**	1	.062
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.363
	N	218	218	218	218
Student Attendance	Pearson Correlation	.065	-.014	.062	1
.	Sig. (2-tailed)	.340	.835	.363	
	N	218	218	218	218
Student Behavior	Pearson Correlation	.131	.130	.112	.204**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.053	.055	.100	.002
	N	218	218	218	218
Student Engagement	Pearson Correlation	.216**	.147*	.131	.227**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.030	.053	.001
	N	218	218	218	218
Student Achievement	Pearson Correlation	.256**	.143*	.192**	.165*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.035	.005	.015
	N	218	218	218	218

Table 11 (continued)

		Pearson Correlations		
		Student Behavior	Student Engagement	Student Achievement
CRCT Reading Score	Pearson Correlation	.131	.216**	.256**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.053	.001	.000
	N	218	218	218
CRCT English Score	Pearson Correlation	.130	.147*	.143*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.055	.030	.035
	N	218	218	218
CRCT Math Score	Pearson Correlation	.112	.131	.192**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.100	.053	.005
	N	218	218	218
Student Attendance.	Pearson Correlation	.204**	.227**	.165*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.001	.015
	N	218	218	218
Student Behavior	Pearson Correlation	1	.549**	.411**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	218	218	218
Student Engagement	Pearson Correlation	.549**	1	.589**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	218	218	218
Student Achievement	Pearson Correlation	.411**	.589**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	218	218	218

Table 12

Correlation of CRCT Scores with Independent Variables

		Pearson Correlations			
		CRCT Reading Score	CRCT English Score	CRCT Math Score	School Climate
CRCT Reading Score	Pearson Correlation	1	.897**	.843**	-.133
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.111
	N	144	144	144	144
CRCT English Score	Pearson Correlation	.897**	1	.864**	-.099
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.239
	N	144	144	144	144
CRCT Math Score	Pearson Correlation	.843**	.864**	1	-.147
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.080
	N	144	144	144	144
School Climate	Pearson Correlation	-.133	-.099	-.147	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.111	.239	.080	
	N	144	144	144	144
Teacher Student Relationship	Pearson Correlation	-.176*	-.147	-.146	.683**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.035	.079	.081	.000
	N	144	144	144	144
Parent-Student Relationship	Pearson Correlation	.026	.046	.033	.505**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.756	.580	.691	.000
	N	144	144	144	144
Peer-Student Relationship	Pearson Correlation	-.081	-.016	-.023	.476**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.335	.849	.786	.000
	N	144	144	144	144
Instructional Development	Pearson Correlation	-.088	-.090	-.102	.433**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.292	.281	.223	.000
	N	144	144	144	144

Table 12 (continued)

		Pearson Correlations			
		Teacher Student	Parent Student	Peer Student	Instruct Delivery
CRCT Reading Score	Pearson Correlation	-.176*	.026	-.081	-.088
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.035	.756	.335	.292
	N	144	144	144	144
CRCT English Score	Pearson Correlation	-.147	.046	-.016	-.090
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.079	.580	.849	.281
	N	144	144	144	144
CRCT Math Score	Pearson Correlation	-.146	.033	-.023	-.102
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.081	.691	.786	.223
	N	144	144	144	144
School Climate	Pearson Correlation	.683**	.505**	.476**	.433**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	144	144	144	144
Teacher-Student Relationship	Pearson Correlation	1	.486**	.483**	.424**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	144	144	144	144
Parent-Student Relationship	Pearson Correlation	.486**	1	.362**	.506**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	144	144	144	144
Peer-Student Relationship	Pearson Correlation	.483**	.362**	1	.229**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.006
	N	144	144	144	144
Instructional Development	Pearson Correlation	.424**	.506**	.229**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.006	
	N	144	144	144	144

Table 13

Mean Scores of Dependent and Independent Variables by Male Ethnicity

Ethnicity		School Climate	Student Attendance	Student Behavior	Student Engagement	Student Achievement
Black	Mean	22.4744	10.1795	13.4487	13.5385	15.3205
	N	78	78	78	78	78
	Std. Deviation	5.70423	1.51823	2.53109	2.37789	3.18883
White	Mean	20.4490	10.2857	12.8367	12.4490	14.6122
	N	49	49	49	49	49
	Std. Deviation	4.26254	1.09924	5.07176	1.83781	2.49012
Latino	Mean	22.0000	10.5294	13.2941	12.1176	13.7059
	N	17	17	17	17	17
	Std. Deviation	3.82426	1.23073	2.28486	1.69124	2.71027
Total	Mean	21.7292	10.2569	13.2222	13.0000	14.8889
	N	144	144	144	144	144
	Std. Deviation	5.11165	1.35227	3.57036	2.20299	2.94498

Ethnicity		Teacher-Student Relationship	Parent-Student Relationship	Peer-Student Relationship	Instructional Development
Black	Mean	11.9103	14.0385	10.8590	20.0256
	N	78	78	78	78
	Std. Deviation	3.22404	2.49905	3.23826	3.37667
White	Mean	10.4898	13.2245	9.5306	18.6531
	N	49	49	49	49
	Std. Deviation	2.79972	2.43469	2.62283	4.73265
Latino	Mean	11.9412	13.5294	10.6471	20.5882
	N	17	17	17	17
	Std. Deviation	2.94683	1.37467	2.84915	2.76267
Total	Mean	11.4306	13.7014	10.3819	19.6250
	N	144	144	144	144
	Std. Deviation	3.10797	2.38902	3.04051	3.87727

Table 14

Mean scores of Dependent and Independent Variables by Female Ethnicity

Ethnicity		Student Attendance	Student Behavior	Student Engagement	Student Achievement	School Climate
Black	Mean	10.5568	13.9545	13.2614	15.0568	22.0227
	N	88	88	88	88	88
	Std. Deviation	1.35492	1.83772	1.57198	2.78071	3.82063
White	Mean	10.5143	13.3714	13.0571	14.6857	20.7143
	N	35	35	35	35	35
	Std. Deviation	1.19734	2.04487	2.18205	2.94829	4.17677
Latino	Mean	10.3571	13.5714	13.0714	13.5714	22.0714
	N	14	14	14	14	14
	Std. Deviation	1.27745	1.65084	1.94004	2.53329	2.75860
Total	Mean	10.5510	13.7279	13.1565	14.7687	21.6190
	N	147	147	147	147	147
	Std. Deviation	1.28310	1.89288	1.81961	2.80671	3.83447

Ethnicity		Teacher-Student Relationship	Parent-Student Relationship	Peer-Student Relationship	Instructional Development
Black	Mean	11.6591	14.4432	10.7159	20.9318
	N	88	88	88	88
	Std. Deviation	2.74547	1.44523	2.90837	2.80720
White	Mean	10.7714	12.9714	9.7143	19.0000
	N	35	35	35	35
	Std. Deviation	2.37741	2.43124	2.59605	3.73379
Latino	Mean	11.5714	13.7857	11.8571	20.0714
	N	14	14	14	14
	Std. Deviation	2.68082	2.00686	1.61041	2.70226
Total	Mean	11.3197	13.8299	10.5510	20.2993
	N	147	147	147	147
	Std. Deviation	2.65863	2.11768	2.76520	3.14581

Table 15

Correlation of Demographics and CRCT Scores

		CRCT Reading Score	CRCT English Score	CRCT Math Score	Ethnicity of Responder	Age of Responder	I Participate in School Sponsored Sports
CRCT Reading	Pearson Correlation	1	..544**	.406**	-.036	-.314**	.178**
Score	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.595	.000	.009
	N	218	218	218	218	218	218
CRCT English	Pearson Correlation	.544**	1	.473**	-.020	-.218**	.116
Score	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.770	.001	.086
	N	218	218	218	218	218	218
CRCT Math Score	Pearson Correlation	.406**	.473**	1	-.033	-.160*	.090
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.623	.018	.184
	N	218	218	218	218	218	218
Ethnicity of	Pearson Correlation	-.036	-.020	-.033	1	.024	-.148*
Responder	Sig. (2-tailed)	.595	.770	.623		.729	.028
	N	218	218	218	218	218	218
Age of Responder	Pearson Correlation	-.314**	-.218**	-.160*	.024	1	.145*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.018	.729		.033
	N	218	218	218	218	218	218
I Participate in	Pearson Correlation	.178**	.116	.090	-.148*	.145*	1
School Sponsored	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	.085	.184	.028	.033	
Sports	N	218	218	218	218	218	218
I Participate in	Pearson Correlation	.323**	.223**	.168*	-.054	-.164*	.188**
School Sponsored	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.013	.426	.015	.005
Clubs	N	218	218	218	218	218	218
Father's Education	Pearson Correlation	-.012	-.030	-.011	-.064	-.053	-.038
Level	Sig. (2-tailed)	.854	.662	.875	.348	.440	.577
	N	218	218	218	218	218	218
Mother's	Pearson Correlation	.015	-.022	-.072	-.183**	-.011	.036
Education	Sig. (2-tailed)	.830	.750	.291	.007	.872	.601
Level	N	218	218	218	218	218	218

Table 15 (continued)

		CRCT Reading Score	CRCT English Score	CRCT Math Score	Ethnicity of Responder	Age of Responder	I Participate in School Sponsored Sports
Father's	Pearson Correlation	-.079	-.135*	-.173*	-.043	.097	-.152*
Employment	Sig. (2-tailed)	.244	.047	.010	.526	.153	.025
Status	N	218	218	218	218	218	218
Mother's	Pearson Correlation	-.134*	-.173*	-.038	.076	.136*	-.129
Employment	Sig. (2-tailed)	.049	.010	.573	.267	.045	.058
Status	N	218	218	218	218	218	218

		I Participate in School Sponsored Clubs	Father's Education Level	Mother's Education Level	Father's Employment Status	Mother's Employment Status
CRCT Reading	Pearson Correlation	.323**	-.012	.015	-.079	-.134*
Score	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	..864	.830	.244	.049
	N	218	218	218	218	218
CRCT English	Pearson Correlation	.223**	-.030	-.022	-.135*	-.173*
Score	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.662	.750	.047	.010
	N	218	218	218	218	218
CRCT Math Score	Pearson Correlation	.168*	-.011	-.072	-.173*	-.038
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	.875	.291	.010	.573
	N	218	218	218	218	218
Ethnicity of	Pearson Correlation	-.054	-.064	-.183**	-.043	.076
Responder	Sig. (2-tailed)	.426	.348	.007	.526	.267
	N	218	218	218	218	218
Age of Responder	Pearson Correlation	-.164*	-.053	-.011	.097	.136*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.015	.440	.872	.153	.045
	N	218	218	218	218	218
I Participate in	Pearson Correlation	.188**	-.038	.036	-.152*	-.129
School Sponsored	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.577	.601	.025	.058
Sports	N	218	218	218	218	218

Table 15 (continued)

		I Participate in School Sponsored Clubs	Father's Education Level	Mother's Education Level	Father's Employment Status	Mother's Employment Status
I Participate in	Pearson Correlation	1	-.077	.061	-.177**	-.170*
School Sponsored	Sig. (2-tailed)		.257	.369	.009	.012
Clubs	N	218	218	218	218	218
Father's Education	Pearson Correlation	-.077	1	.591**	.126	.109
Level	Sig. (2-tailed)	.257		.000	.063	.110
	N	218	218	218	218	218
Mother's	Pearson Correlation	.061	.591**	1	-.106	.051
Education	Sig. (2-tailed)	.369	.000		.118	.457
Level	N	218	218	218	218	218
Father's	Pearson Correlation	-.177**	.126	.106	1	.189**
Employment	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	.063	.118		.005
Status	N	218	218	218	218	218
Mother's	Pearson Correlation	-.170*	.109	.051	.189**	1
Employment	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	.110	.457	.005	
Status	N	218	218	218	218	218

Table 16 shows that Instructional Delivery is related significantly to all of the dependent variables pointing toward student motivation and operationalized as student behavior, student engagement, and student achievement with the exception of attendance. In addition, Instructional Delivery by means of technology was significantly related to all of the independent variables such as school climate, teacher-student relationships, parent-student relationships, and peer-student relationships.

Table 16

Correlation of Dependent with Independent Variables

		Student Attendance	Student Behavior	Student Engagement	Student Achievement	School Climate
Student Attendance	Pearson Correlation	1	.079	.120*	.082	.044
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.173	.038	.156	.448
	N	300	300	300	300	300
Student Behavior	Pearson Correlation	.079	1	.489**	.347**	.386
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.173		.000	.000	.000
	N	300	300	300	300	300
Student Engagement	Pearson Correlation	.120*	.489**	1	.593**	.390**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.038	.000		.000	.000
	N	300	300	300	300	300
Student Achievement	Pearson Correlation	.082	.347**	.593**	1	.466**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.156	.000	.000		.000
	N	300	300	300	300	300
School Climate	Pearson Correlation	.044	.386**	.390**	.466**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.448	.000	.000	.000	
	N	300	300	300	300	300
Teacher-Student	Pearson Correlation	.043	.322**	.403**	.456**	.648**
Relationship	Sig. (2-tailed)	.456	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	300	300	300	300	300
Parent-Student	Pearson Correlation	.065	.383**	.502**	.464**	.438**
Relationship	Sig. (2-tailed)	.263	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	300	300	300	300	300
Peer-Student	Pearson Correlation	.071	.165**	.281**	.404**	.464**
Relationship	Sig. (2-tailed)	.222	.004	.000	.000	.000
	N	300	300	300	300	300
Instructional	Pearson Correlation	.048	.304**	.319**	.275**	.410**
Development	Sig. (2-tailed)	.410	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	300	300	300	300	300

Table 16 (continued)

		Teacher-Student Relationship	Parent-Student Relationship	Peer-Student Relationship	Instructional Development
Student Attendance	Pearson Correlation	.043	.065	.071	.048
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.456	.263	.222	.410
	N	300	300	300	300
Student Behavior	Pearson Correlation	.322**	.383**	.165**	.304**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.004	.000
	N	300	300	300	300
Student Engagement	Pearson Correlation	.403**	.502**	.281**	.319**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	300	300	300	300
Student Achievement	Pearson Correlation	.465**	.464**	.404**	.275**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	300	300	300	300
School Climate	Pearson Correlation	.648**	.438**	.464**	.410**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	300	300	300	300
Teacher-Student	Pearson Correlation	1	.434**	.489**	.370**
Relationship	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	300	300	300	300
Parent-Student	Pearson Correlation	.434**	1	.356**	.445**
Relationship	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	300	300	300	300
Peer-Student	Pearson Correlation	.489**	.356**	1	.262**
Relationship	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	300	300	300	300
Instructional	Pearson Correlation	.370**	.445**	.262**	1
Development	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	300	300	300	300

Table 17 presents the qualitative responses categorized by dependent with independent variables.

Table 17

Qualitative Responses Categorized by Dependent with Independent Variables

Variables	Responses
Attendance	Non Applied
Behavior	"I think the school needs to be a little more strict because people are causing a lot of trouble but they are only giving them mercy—something that they don't deserve."
Engagement	"The school work isn't very hard, but there are so many things to complete and do, that it's overwhelming and stressful."
Achievement	"I apologize for my past failures and I have to say I've come a long way to get retained now, but I promise you that won't happen again."
School Climate	"I think that sometimes the teachers and administrators are so concerned about safety that they are not concerned about other important things." Sports are highly praised but other academic related things do not get any special attention." "This school needs more freedom and it needs fun." "This school needs more money." "The school is poor. They don't have the full amount of teachers, and many times, we can't do things because of school funds." "I still feel like I'm still in elementary school because we have to walk in lines and y'all have no bells when which periods. We need to sit where we want to sit in the lunch room."

Table 17 (continued)

Variables	Responses
	"This school's teachers need to care more."
	"This school can be sexist."
	"These kids are bad at my school."
	"How does my school make me feel like a winner?"
Teacher-Student Relationships	"Many times when I wake up in the morning, I don't want to come to school. Most of the teachers are very discouraging."
	"Some of the teachers lift me up, some make me feel depressed. I would say many other people feel the same way."
	I would love to bring my tablet to school; it's a safety matter."
	"...a few of the teachers are rude, they say things like, 'shut up, get out, stupid, pathetic, and strange.'"
	"Most of the teachers won't even give us the Wi-Fi password."
	"I feel like some of my teachers don't really talk to me about how I am doing in their classes, including one specific teacher that I am sort of scared to ask and answer question in her class cause I feel like she doesn't even pay any attention to me at all."
Parent-Student Relationships	"My mother hates this school so badly. I'm going to . . . next year. I'm looking forward to it."
Peer-Student Relationships	"I feel that sometimes my peers do not accept others. In fact, people bully others under the radar and that is not right."
	"I think that we should use more technology at school. Also, play

Table 17 (continued)

Variables	Responses
	more games and more songs to help us learn more because kids will be more involved instead of with books."
	"I think we should use more technology, more often that usual."
	"I would like to use technology in class more often. I think it helps students and it makes learning better and more fun."
	"Overall, . . . middle school is good. It would be a lot better if they used a lot more technology."
Instructional Delivery	"The school should give us laptops, Ipads, etc.
	"I would enjoy using technology such as laptops, Ipad, Iphone, and other technology, but I feel that some students might get distracted using their technology. Though I also feel that the students will enjoy being taught by this way, but mostly distracted by learning what is needed to know and might bring out school's academic history down."
	"The teachers should use more technology. The students should be able to use technology during class time."

Qualitative Data

As reported, a sample size of 300 students was invited to take part in the study. Each respondent was asked to comment to the researcher about his or her views about any of the survey questions. Thirty-seven respondents gave comments. There appears to be no general agreement about sample size in qualitative studies. The researcher,

because the respondents provided varied comments, used the most direct comments fitting into the variable categories for the purposes of this study.

The respondents were not directly interviewed by the researcher. All comments were given with the permission of the students being surveyed. After surveys were collected, the comments were transcribed into a computer file. Care was taken by the researcher to assure the respondent making comments would not be identifiable in any subsequent report by name, only by gender.

All of the survey instruments were read by the researcher and coded in the format of the independent and dependent variables. Nine category headings were generated from the data and under these; all of the data were accounted for. Four independent researchers were asked to verify the seeming accuracy of the category system and after discussion with them; minor modifications were made to it.

A number of respondents found that instructional delivery could be enhanced in a way that aloud students to be more engaged in the educational process with the teacher. In particular, they found that the use of laptops and IPads in the classroom would help them to learn more and the general consensus was that teachers displayed a general knowledge and comfort level in using technology that would benefit the students. Jablonski (2009) suggested that student use of technology is not affected by teachers' pedagogical beliefs, but the teachers convenient access to technology and training in technology, may be more important than teachers' pedagogical beliefs when predicting technology use by students. One respondent commented that, “I would like to use technology in class more often. I think it helps students and it

makes learning better and more fun" (Respondent 94, personal communication, October 11, 2013). The comment brings further clarity to findings of Sagan (2010) who reported that middle school students often complain that their classes are boring and that the only reason they come to school is to socialize with friends. The use of technology in instructional delivery could help middle schools become what Sagan (2010) puts forth that they should be—communities of learning by providing a climate that enhances intellectual development, with high expectations, and challenges for every student with an integrated curriculum.

Another respondent noted that although the use of technology to them would be a positive for other students this same process could also be a distraction:

> I would enjoy using technology such as laptop, ipad, iphone and other technology, but I feel that some students might get distracted using their technology. Though I also feel that the students will enjoy being teach by this way, but mostly distracted by learning what is needed to know and might bring our schools academic history down. (Respondent 93, personal communication, October 11, 2013)

The respondents also seem to indicate that there is a gap between what some teachers are expressing in the classroom through their manners and behaviors toward students versus what teachers think is coming across. One respondent noted that:

> I feel like some of my teachers don't really talk to me about how I am doing in their classes, including one specific teacher that I am sort of scared to ask and answer questions in her class cause I feel like she doesn't even pay any

attention to me at all. (Respondent 226, personal communication, October 11, 2013)

This comment was important to note because Stipek (2006) stated when students have a secure relationship with their teachers, they are more comfortable taking risks that enhance learning, tackling challenging tasks, persisting when they run into difficulty, or asking questions when they are confused. Urban students claim that when a teacher shows genuine concern for them, they feel that they owe the teacher something in return. Students are motivated to achieve because they do not want to disappoint a teacher who cares about them (Davidson, 1999).

Research Questions and Hypotheses Testing

There are 20 research questions in this study. This section provides an analysis of the research questions and a testing of the null hypothesis. The data with respect to all of the research questions, found in Tables 11- 16, were used to provide analysis to answer the research questions and testing the null hypotheses.

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant relationship between middle school student attendance and school climate?

There is no significant relationship between middles school student attendance and Middle school student attendance and school climate. The Pearson *r* was selected to test this relationship for this null hypothesis because the dependent variable was interval and the independent variable was interval. The correlation analysis generated a correlation coefficient $r = .044$, $n = 300$, $p = .448$, where the calculated probability is less than the accepted significance level of $p < 0.05$. Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted

and there is no significant relationship between student attendance and school climate (see Tables 16 and 18).

Table 18

School Climate as an Influencer on Student Attendance

		Correlations	
		Attendance	School Climate
Attendance	Pearson Correlation	1	.044
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.448
	N	300	300
School Climate	Pearson Correlation	.044	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.448	
	N	300	300

RQ2: Is there a statistically significant relationship between Middle school student attendance and teacher-student relationship?

There is no significant relationship between middles school student attendance and middle school teacher–student relationships. The Pearson *r* was selected to test this relationship for this null hypothesis because the dependent variable was interval and the independent variable was interval. The correlation analysis generated a correlation coefficient $r = .043$, $n = 300$, $p = .456$, where the calculated probability is less than the accepted significance level of $p < 0.05$. Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted and there is no significant relationship between student attendance and Teacher–Student Relationships (see Tables 16 and 19).

Table 19

Teacher–Student Relationship as an Influencer on Student Attendance

		Correlations	
		Attendance	Teacher-Student Relationship
Attendance	Pearson Correlation	1	.043
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.456
	N	300	300
Teacher-Student Relationship	Pearson Correlation	.043	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.456	
	N	300	300

RQ3: Is there a statistically significant relationship between middle school student attendance and Instructional Delivery?

There is no significant relationship between middles school student attendance and Middle school Instructional Delivery. The Pearson *r* was selected to test this relationship for this null hypothesis because the dependent variable was interval and the independent variable was interval. The correlation analysis generated a correlation coefficient $r = .048$, $n = 300$, $p = .410$, where the calculated probability is less than the accepted significance level of $p < 0.05$. Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted and there is no significant relationship between student attendance and school climate (see Tables 16 and 20).

Table 20

Instructional Delivery as an Influencer on Student Attendance

		Correlations	
		Attendance	Instruction Delivery
Attendance	Pearson Correlation	1	.048
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.410
	N	300	300
Instruction Delivery	Pearson Correlation	.048	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.410	
	N	300	300

RQ4: Is there a statistically significant relationship between middle school student attendance and parent-student relationship?

There is no significant relationship between middles school student attendance and middle school Parent–Student Relationships. The Pearson *r* was selected to test this relationship for this null hypothesis because the dependent variable was interval and the independent variable was interval. The correlation analysis generated a correlation coefficient r = .065, n = 300, p = .263, where the calculated probability is less than the accepted significance level of $p < 0.05$. Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted and there is no significant relationship between student attendance and school climate (see Tables 16 and 21).

Table 21

Parent–Student Relationship as an Influencer on Student Attendance

		Correlations	
		Attendance	Parent-Student Relationship
Attendance	Pearson Correlation	1	.065
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.263
	N	300	300
Parent-Student Relationship	Pearson Correlation	.065	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.263	
	N	300	300

RQ5: Is there a statistically significant relationship between middle school student attendance and peer-student relationship?

There is no significant relationship between middles school student attendance and middle school Peer–Student Relationships. The Pearson *r* was selected to test this relationship for this null hypothesis because the dependent variable was interval and the independent variable was interval. The correlation analysis generated a correlation coefficient r = .071, n = 300, p = .222, where the calculated probability is less than the accepted significance level of $p < 0.05$. Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted and there is no significant relationship between student attendance and Peer–Student Relationships (see Tables 16 and 22).

Table 22

Peer–Student Relationship as an Influencer on Student Attendance

		Correlations	
		Attendance	Peer-Student Relationship
Attendance	Pearson Correlation	1	.078
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.178
	N	300	300
Peer-Student Relationship	Pearson Correlation	.078	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.178	
	N	300	300

RQ6: Is there a statistically significant relationship between middle school student behavior and school climate?

The Pearson *r* was selected to test a relationship for the null hypothesis of this research question because the dependent variable was interval and the independent variable was interval. The correlation analysis generated a correlation coefficient r = .386, n = 300, p = .000, where the calculated probability is less than the accepted significance level of $p < 0.05$. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected and there is a significant relationship between middle school student behavior and school climate (see Tables 16 and 23).

Table 23

School Climate as an Influencer on Student Behavior

		Correlations	
		Behavior	School Climate
Behavior	Pearson Correlation	1	.386**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
School Climate	Pearson Correlation	.386**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

RQ7: Is there a statistically significant relationship between middle school student behavior and teacher-student relationship?

The Pearson *r* was selected to test a relationship for the null hypothesis of this research question because the dependent variable was interval and the independent variable was interval. The correlation analysis generated a correlation coefficient r = .322, n = 300, p = .000, where the calculated probability is less than the accepted significance level of $p < 0.05$. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected and there is a significant relationship between middle school student behavior and Teacher-Student Relationships (see Tables 16 and 24).

Table 24

Teacher-Student Relationship as an Influencer on Student Behavior

		Correlations	
		Behavior	Teacher-Student Relationship
Behavior	Pearson Correlation	1	.322**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Teacher-Student Relationship	Pearson Correlation	.322**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

RQ8: Is there a statistically significant relationship between middle school student behavior and Instructional Delivery?

The Pearson *r* was selected to test a relationship for the null hypothesis of this research question because the dependent variable was interval and the independent variable was interval. The correlation analysis generated a correlation coefficient r = .304, n = 300, p = .000, where the calculated probability is less than the accepted significance level of $p < 0.05$. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected and there is a significant relationship between middle school student behavior and Instructional Delivery (see Tables 16 and 25).

Table 25

Instructional Delivery as an Influencer on Student Behavior

		Correlations	
		Behavior	Instruction Delivery
Behavior	Pearson Correlation	1	.304**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Instruction Delivery	Pearson Correlation	.304**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

RQ9: Is there a statistically significant relationship between middle school student behavior and parent-student relationship?

The Pearson *r* was selected to test a relationship for the null hypothesis of this research question because the dependent variable was interval and the independent variable was interval. The correlation analysis generated a correlation coefficient r = .383, n = 300, p = .000, where the calculated probability is less than the accepted significance level of $p < 0.05$. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected and there is a significant relationship between middle school student behavior and Parent-student relationship (see Tables 16 and 26).

Table 26

Parent-Student Relationship as an Influencer on Student Behavior

		Correlations	
		Behavior	Parent-Student Relationship
Behavior	Pearson Correlation	1	.383**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Parent-Student Relationship	Pearson Correlation	.383**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

RQ10: Is there a statistically significant relationship between middle school student behavior and peer-student relationship?

The Pearson *r* was selected to test a relationship for the null hypothesis of this research question because the dependent variable was interval and the independent variable was interval. The correlation analysis generated a correlation coefficient r = .153, n = 300, p = .008, where the calculated probability is less than the accepted significance level of $p < 0.05$. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected and there is a significant relationship between middle school student behavior and Peer-student relationship (see Tables 16 and 27).

Table 27

Peer-Student Relationship as an Influencer on Student Behavior

		Correlations	
		Behavior	Peer-Student Relationship
Behavior	Pearson Correlation	1	.153**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.008
	N	300	300
Peer-Student Relationship	Pearson Correlation	.153**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	
	N	300	300

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

RQ11: Is there a statistically significant relationship between middle school student engagement and school climate?

The Pearson *r* was selected to test a relationship for the null hypothesis of this research question because the dependent variable was interval and the independent variable was interval. The correlation analysis generated a correlation coefficient r = .436, n = 300, p = .000, where the calculated probability is less than the accepted significance level of $p < 0.05$. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected and there is a significant relationship between middle school student engagement and school climate (see Tables 16 and 28).

Table 28

School Climate as an Influencer on Student Engagement

		Correlations	
		Engagement	School Climate
Engagement	Pearson Correlation	1	.436**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
School Climate	Pearson Correlation	.436**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

RQ12: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student engagement and teacher-student relationship?

The Pearson *r* was selected to test a relationship for the null hypothesis of this research question because the dependent variable was interval and the independent variable was interval. The correlation analysis generated a correlation coefficient r = .447, n = 300, p = .000, where the calculated probability is less than the accepted significance level of $p < 0.05$. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected and there is a significant relationship between middle school student engagement and teacher-student relationship (see Tables 16 and 29).

Table 29

Teacher-Student Relationship as an Influencer on Student Engagement

		Correlations	
		Engagement	Teacher-Student Relationship
Engagement	Pearson Correlation	1	.447**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Teacher-Student Relationship	Pearson Correlation	.447**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

RQ13: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student engagement and Instructional Delivery?

The Pearson *r* was selected to test a relationship for the null hypothesis of this research question because the dependent variable was interval and the independent variable was interval. The correlation analysis generated a correlation coefficient r = .360, n = 300, p = .000, where the calculated probability is less than the accepted significance level of $p < 0.05$. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected and there is a significant relationship between middle school student engagement and Instructional Delivery (see Tables 16 and 30).

Table 30

Instructional Delivery as an Influencer on Student Engagement

		Correlations	
		Engagement	Instruction Delivery
Engagement	Pearson Correlation	1	.360**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Instruction Delivery	Pearson Correlation	.360**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

RQ14: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student engagement and parent-student relationship?

The Pearson *r* was selected to test a relationship for the null hypothesis of this research question because the dependent variable was interval and the independent variable was interval. The correlation analysis generated a correlation coefficient r = .548, n = 300, p = .000, where the calculated probability is less than the accepted significance level of $p < 0.05$. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected and there is a significant relationship between middle school student engagement and parent-student relationship (see Tables 16 and 31).

Table 31

Parent-Student Relationship as an Influencer on Student Engagement

		Correlations	
		Engagement	Parent-Student Relationship
Engagement	Pearson Correlation	1	.548**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Parent-Student Relationship	Pearson Correlation	.548**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

RQ15: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student engagement and peer-student relationship?

The Pearson *r* was selected to test a relationship for the null hypothesis of this research question because the dependent variable was interval and the independent variable was interval. The correlation analysis generated a correlation coefficient r = .304, n = 300, p = .000, where the calculated probability is less than the accepted significance level of $p < 0.05$. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected and there is a significant relationship between middle school student engagement and peer-student relationship (see Tables 16 and 32).

Table 32

Peer-Student Relationship as an Influencer on Student Engagement

		Correlations	
		Engagement	Peer-Student Relationship
Engagement	Pearson Correlation	1	.304**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Peer-Student Relationship	Pearson Correlation	.304**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

RQ16: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student academic achievement and school climate?

The Pearson *r* was selected to test a relationship for the null hypothesis of this research question because the dependent variable was interval and the independent variable was interval. The correlation analysis generated a correlation coefficient r = .466, n = 300, p = .000, where the calculated probability is less than the accepted significance level of $p < 0.05$. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected and there is a significant relationship between middle school student academic achievement and school climate (see Tables 16 and 33).

Table 33

School Climate as an Influencer on Student Academic Achievement

		Correlations	
		Achievement	School Climate
Achievement	Pearson Correlation	1	.466**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
School Climate	Pearson Correlation	.466**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

RQ17: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student academic achievement and teacher-student relationship?

The Pearson *r* was selected to test a relationship for the null hypothesis of this research question because the dependent variable was interval and the independent variable was interval. The correlation analysis generated a correlation coefficient r = .465, n = 300, p = .000, where the calculated probability is less than the accepted significance level of $p < 0.05$. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected and there is a significant relationship between middle school student academic achievement and teacher-student relationship (see Tables 16 and 34).

Table 34

Teacher-Student Relationship as an Influencer on Student Academic Achievement

		Correlations	
		Achievement	Teacher-Student Relationship
Achievement	Pearson Correlation	1	.465**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Teacher-Student Relationship	Pearson Correlation	.465**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

RQ18: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student academic achievement and Instructional Delivery?

The Pearson *r* was selected to test a relationship for the null hypothesis of this research question because the dependent variable was interval and the independent variable was interval. The correlation analysis generated a correlation coefficient r = .275, n = 300, p = .000, where the calculated probability is less than the accepted significance level of $p < 0.05$. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected and there is a significant relationship between middle school student academic achievement and Instructional Delivery (see Tables 16 and 35).

Table 35

Instructional Delivery as an Influencer on Student Academic Achievement

		Correlations	
		Achievement	Instruction Delivery
Achievement	Pearson Correlation	1	.275**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Instruction Delivery	Pearson Correlation	.275**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

RQ19: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student academic achievement and parent-student relationship?

The Pearson *r* was selected to test a relationship for the null hypothesis of this research question because the dependent variable was interval and the independent variable was interval. The correlation analysis generated a correlation coefficient r = .464, n = 300, p = .000, where the calculated probability is less than the accepted significance level of $p < 0.05$. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected and there is a significant relationship between middle school student academic achievement and parent-student relationship (see Tables 16 and 36).

Table 36

Parent-Student Relationship as an Influencer on Student Academic Achievement

		Correlations	
		Achievement	Parent-Student Relationship
Achievement	Pearson Correlation	1	.464**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Parent-Student Relationship	Pearson Correlation	.464**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

RQ20: Is there a statistically significant relationship between student academic achievement and peer-student relationship?

The Pearson *r* was selected to test a relationship for the null hypothesis of this research question because the dependent variable was interval and the independent variable was interval. The correlation analysis generated a correlation coefficient r = .412, n = 300, p = .000, where the calculated probability is less than the accepted significance level of $p < 0.05$. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected and there is a significant relationship between middle school student academic achievement and peer-student relationship (see Tables 16 and 37).

Table 37

Peer-Student Relationship as an Influencer on Student Academic Achievement

		Correlations	
		Achievement	Peer-Student Relationship
Achievement	Pearson Correlation	1	.412**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Peer-Student Relationship	Pearson Correlation	.412**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

African-American Males

As stated earlier, according to Hébert (1998), the struggle to improve the educational experience of African-American youth continues, and researchers within the past decade have offered new explanations for variations in the achievement levels of African American students. Hébert mentioned how research proposed that we pay closer attention to the many factors influencing the achievement levels of African-American students. Hébert exclaimed that research maintained that encouraging the potential and talents of all youth requires a broadened vision of giftedness that reflects an understanding that talent varies markedly with cultural, racial, economic, and linguistic backgrounds.

The results of this study show that among all male respondent's African-American males participate in school sponsored sports at double the rate of other male

students. Yet, the researcher found in this study that when it comes to academic clubs and organizations African-American males are not participating at a ratio of almost 80 percent, meaning roughly 20 percent of all African-American males participate in academic clubs and organizations, which serve to broaden the students' academic and social perspectives.

Another interesting find was that among all male respondents, African-American males believe that good behavior and cordiality are plus-added benefits to their education process. African-American males in this study believe at a ratio of 90%, within their race and gender, are seemingly more aware of the impact of behavior in the classroom and around the school. Yet, the researcher found in this study that when it comes to academic achievement African-American males are not achieving academically at a ratio consistent with their awareness of the impact of behavior on academic achievement.

According to McMillian (2003), African-American students have made substantial progress over the last 30 years; however, there is room for improvement, especially among African-American males. To solve the underachievement problem of African Americans, more attention must be paid to the African-American male population. Why, especially for this population, is important to understand when underachieving males affect the community as a whole (McMillian, 2003).

This study did not detect any evidence for root causes for underachievement among African-American males. From African-American male students perspectives they are paying attention in class at a ratio of over 90%, African-American males are

participating in learning at a rate of over 95%, African-American males are working hard to achieve at a ratio of over 90%, and over 97% of African-American males are competing to make good grades. African-American male students based upon the findings in this study are very much engaged in the academic process. Quite possibly what academic outcomes may be telling us is that some of the academic influencers are not fully engaged into African-American male students.

The most interesting finding that the researcher identified seems to be an innocent flaw or academic relationship naïveté on the part of the African-American male students and it is this, although African-American males valued the influence of the independent variables more than whites did and Latino's, African American males trailed white males in all three CRCT categories. A finding that was just as alarming was their perspective of close relationships with their teachers or the desire for the same, while still trailing their counterparts on CRCT scores (see Table 13).

One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is that African-American male students do have perspectives about teacher quality. This study finds that African-American male students are not only paying attention to what is going on in class, but they are paying attention to who is leading the class. At a ratio of over 97%, African-American males believe that they are capable of making good grades with good teachers, but when it comes to whom they perceive as bad teachers African-American males were split 41% to 47%. With 41% of African-American males believing that, they make bad grades when they have bad teachers.

This study finds that African-American male students who feel supported by their school are generally athletes who feel that their school climate is one that supports them and makes them feel like a winner and these young men feel like they are expected to uphold the schools' sports legacy of winning. Among all male respondents, 80% of African-American male students feel supported by their school, while among all males 83% of African-American male students feel that they are expected to uphold the sports legacy of the school.

Interestingly, this study finds that African-American male students who feel supported by their school and are generally athletes also feel that their school climate is one that supports them in the classroom. These students (71%) feel important to their teachers personally and academically. Among all male respondents, 66% of African-American male feel that their school expected them to uphold the winning academic legacy of the school. Again, this shows that African-American male students are consciously aware of their academics and the academic environment, regardless of how they are performing on exams and standardized tests.

Finally, one of the most telling outcomes of this study, as it related to African-American male students, was how close the perceived impact of parental involvement and the impact of teacher-student relations scored. As stated earlier, Irvine (1990) noted that a crucial role for black parents is their role as teachers in the home. This role as teacher in the home is the role that parents prefer and the one directly related to the achievement of their children. Parental responsiveness (or a related measure of

acceptance, closeness, involvement, relationship quality, or warmth) has a direct positive relation with academic competence (Gray & Steinberg, 1999).

In this study, 94% of African-American, male students felt supported by their parents, almost 85% felt that their parents expect them to uphold their schools academic legacy, and 80% of African-American male students felt that their parents are concerned about their grades, just 2% above their perception of their teachers concern for the same. Therefore, for many African-American male students, the respect given to teachers in the classroom is almost equal to that of parents. The question is, are teachers using this influence to challenge and elevate African-American male students or are they using this influence to maintain discipline and control of African-American male students without challenging them academically, awakening a presence in the classroom that might be preferred seen and not engaged or heard.

Summary

The focus of this study was to investigate the perceived influence of the independent variables school climate, teacher-student relationships, instructional delivery, parent-student relationships, and peer-student relationships on middle school students' motivation operationalized as dependent variables attendance, behavior, engagement and academic achievement.

Data showed that there were many significant relationships among the variables. This is gratifying to the researcher because the study was conducted through the goodwill of community partners and educational colleagues' committed to pushing through busy schedules to have over 300 middle school students to complete a 57-item questionnaire,

targeting a subgroup of 75, with room for comments, only after first receiving approvals and consents.

The data collected was analyzed at the .05 level of significance utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Chapter VI presents the main findings of this research study based upon the four original purposes for the study with recommendations.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This study set out to determine the influence towards motivation that certain independent variables had upon certain dependent variables, if any. That is, the study hypothesized that student attendance, behavior, engagement and academic achievement may be influenced by students' perceptions of the school climate set by the principal, teacher-student relationships, the teachers' instructional practices, parent-student relationships and positive peer interaction.

First, the researcher concludes, based upon this study, that motivation, as the intervening variable, between influence and academic achievement is negotiated as a bartering agent between the student and these influencers in some capacity throughout the day. The outcome or product of the negotiation weighs heavily on the value placed upon the proposed influencer by the student.

What the researcher concludes as also important is the level of awareness that the influencer has of the relationships ability to impact African-American males. The influencer must realize and understand the power of the influence. This is because at any given time, through intentionally close or unintended values driven relationships with the students, educational lynchpins are being pulled that can propel some students forward while holding others in a disenfranchising, marginalizing, disqualifying

stalemate are being manipulated through climate, behavior, expectations and words impacting African American males in school.

The first purpose of this study was to investigate the potential influence of the school climate, teacher-student relations, instructional delivery, parent-student relations, peer-student relations upon student attendance, student behavior, student engagement and student academic achievement. The researcher concludes that based upon the data in the study, with the exception of the dependent variable attendance, there is a strong correlation between the independent variables school climate, teacher-student relations, instructional delivery, parent-student relations, peer-student relations and their perceived influence on student behavior, student engagement and student academic achievement in and out of the classroom.

The second purpose of this study was to explore middle school male students' perceptions of their school climate, teacher-student relations, instructional delivery, parent-student relations, peer-student relations and these influencers impact on student motivation. The researcher concludes that based upon the data in the study, with the exception of the dependent variable attendance, there is a strong correlation between the independent variables school climate, teacher-student relations, instructional delivery, parent-student relations, peer-student relations and their perceived influence on student behavior, student engagement and student academic achievement on middle school male students.

The third purpose of this study was to explore middle school African-American male students' perceptions of the independent variables school climate, teacher-student

relations, instructional delivery, parent-student relations, peer-student relations to see if there are influencers affecting their motivation. The researcher concludes that based upon the data in the study, the independent variables school climate, teacher-student relations, instructional delivery, parent-student relations, peer-student relations are influencers affecting African-American male students' motivation though parenting relationships and teacher relationships, based upon the data in the study, carry the most influence.

Recommendations

The fourth purpose of this study was to explore strategies that may help school systems address African-American male students' motivation to engage in the academic process at the critical juncture before high school, to decrease dropout rates. In the distant and more recent past, studies concerning African-American males have frequently been limited to analyzing truancy, suspensions, failing grades, and the need for more discipline. Recently, the United States Department of Education has encouraged educational stakeholders at the state and local school board and government levels to be more solution focused, taking a major departure from what the researcher terms punitive research outcomes. Because of this study, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Qualitative research, using the same variables, should be conducted in order to develop an even more empirical and thorough understanding of responses and respondents.
2. Policy makers at the state and local level, including the central office should encourage the use of technology as a priority for school systems.

3. There must be opportunities for administrators and teachers to be intentional about communications between the school and home, as well as, between the classrooms and home.
4. Teachers should seek healthy opportunities for male students, especially African-American males, to compete in academic exercises.
5. Educational leaders must help parents of African-American males to create opportunities to discuss the complexities of school relationships specifically with teachers.
6. Educational leaders must help teachers to become intentional about creating opportunities to leverage the abundance of influence they have with their middle school students, especially African-American males.
7. Educational leaders must help parents to become intentional about creating opportunities to leverage the abundance of influence they have with their middle school children, especially African-American males.
8. Policy makers, educational leaders and teachers should be trained in the use of training and development techniques used by coaches to train and develop athletes and incorporate these techniques into the school and classroom.

APPENDIX A

Permission Letter

RE: Permission to Conduct Research Study

Dear_____:

My Name is Ronnie Jackson, and I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study at your school. I am a Doctoral candidate enrolled in the Educational Leadership Program at Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, GA, and am in the process of completing my Dissertation. My research study is entitled: A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KEY INFLUENCERS AS MOTIVATORS TO ATTENDANCE, BEHAVIOR, ENGAGEMENT, AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS IN METROPOLITAN ATLANTA GEORGIA

I ask that you will allow me to use eighth grade students from the school in English, Reading and Math classes to anonymously complete a 4-page questionnaire, copy enclosed. Interested students, who volunteer to participate, will be given a consent form to be signed by their parent or guardian, copy enclosed, and returned to the primary researcher at the beginning of the survey process.

Dr. _____, if your approval is granted, student participants will complete the survey at the time you deem most appropriate and in a classroom or other quiet setting on the school site that you designate for me. Before school, during school lunch time or after school would be fine for me. The survey process should take no longer than 30 minutes. The survey results will be pooled for my Dissertation and individual results of this study will remain absolutely confidential and anonymous. Should this study be published, only pooled results will be documented. No costs will be incurred by either your school or the individual participants.

Again, Dr. _____, your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. I will follow up with a telephone call this week and would be happy to answer any questions or concerns that you may have at that time. You may contact me at my email address: ronniejackson08@yahoo.com.

Appendix A (continued)

Dr. _____, if you so kindly agree, please sign below and return the signed form in the enclosed self-addressed envelope. Alternatively, kindly submit a signed letter of permission on your school's letterhead acknowledging your consent and permission for me to conduct this survey study at your school..

Sincerely,

Ronnie Jackson, MBA
Clark Atlanta University
Doctoral Student

Enclosures

c: Dr. Moses Norman, Department Chair
Betty Cook, Administrative Secretary

Approved by:

_____	_____	_____
Print your name and title here	Signature	Date

APPENDIX B

Research Study Consent Form

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your child's school is in the process of implementing a research project that seeks to identify motivators to student attendance, student behavior, student engagement and academic achievement. Part of this process is to collect data through questionnaires. We are asking your permission to give your child a questionnaire to complete in an effort to collect this data.

School personnel will administer all questionnaires in the school environment. All student responses will be confidential and given directly to the researcher.

Please check below what your child's permission status will be.

____Yes, I give my child, _____
(Child's Name)
permission to complete the questionnaire.

____No, I do not give my child, _____
(Child's Name)
permission to complete the questionnaire.

Parent's Signature: _____

	Child's Name	**Grade Level**	**Teacher's Name**
1.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____

APPENDIX C

Survey Questionnaire

A Study of Key Influencers on Student Motivation in Middle Schools

Instructions: *Please Place a* ***CHECK MARK (✓)*** *next to the appropriate answer below. Choose only one answer for each question*

Section I: Demographic Information

1. My gender: (1) ___ Male (2) ___ Female

2. Ethnicity: (1) ___ Black (2) ___White (3) ___ Latino (4) ___Asian
   (5) ___ American Indian (6) ___ Other

3. My age: ____ 12 ___ 13 ___ 14 ___ 15

4. My School Grade: _____ 6 ____ 7 ____ 8

   Note: If you are in the 6th or 7thgrade, go to question #8; 8th graders please go to question #5.

5. My score on the Georgia CRCT Reading test in the 7th Grade.

   (1) ____ Does Not Meet (2) ____ Meets (3) ____ Exceeds (4) ____ NA

6. My score on the Georgia CRCT English/language test in the 7th Grade.

   (1) ____ Does Not Meet (2) ____ Meets (3) ____ Exceeds (4) ____ NA

7. My score on the Georgia CRCT Math test in the 7th Grade

   (1) ____ Does Not Meet (2) ____ Meets (3) ____ Exceeds (4) ____ NA

8. I participate in school-sponsored sports (1) ____No (2) ____ Yes

9. I would like to participate in school-sponsored sports. (1) ____No (2) ____ Yes

10. I participate in school-sponsored clubs. (1) ____No (2) ____ Yes

11. I would like to participate in school-sponsored clubs. (1) ____No (2) ____ Yes

Appendix C (continued)

12. What is the HIGHEST level of education your Father completed?

1) ____ Elementary School (Grades 1 through 5)
2) ____ Middle School (Grades 6 through 8)
3) ____ Some high school (Grades 9 through 11)
4) ____ High school graduate/GED
5) ____ Technical School
6) ____ Some College
7) ____ College Graduate
8) ____ Don't Know

13. What is the HIGHEST level of education your Mother completed?

1) ____ Elementary School (Grades 1 through 5)
2) ____ Middle School (Grades 6 through 8)
3) ____ Some high school (Grades 9 through 11)
4) ____ High school graduate/GED
5) ____ Technical School
6) ____ Some College
7) ____ College Graduate
8) ____ Don't Know

14. What is your FATHERS CURRENT employment status?

1) ____Business Owner
2) ____Employed
3) ____Unemployed
4) ____ Retired
5) ____On Disability
6) ____ Don't Know

15. What is your MOTHERS CURRENT employment status?

1) ____Business Owner
2) ____Employed
3) ____Unemployed
4) ____ Retired
5) ____On Disability
6) ____ Don't Know

Section II: How much do you agree with the following statements?

Instructions: Write the number indicating your answer (**1 thru 4**) in the blank space in front of each statement on the questionnaire. Choose only one answer for each item and respond to all of the statements.

Appendix C (continued)

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

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Student Motivation Attendance

_____16. I attend school regularly
_____17. I attend all of my classes regularly
_____18. I am tardy to school regularly
_____19. I am absent from class regularly

Student Motivation Behavior

_____20. Being on good behavior helps me at school
_____21. Being cordial towards teacher(s) helps me at school
_____22. I have good behavior at school
_____23. I have good behavior in all of my classes

Student Motivation Engagement

_____24. I pay attention in my classes
_____25. I participate in my classes
_____26 . I work hard to achieve in class
_____27. I participate in extracurricular activities

Student Motivation Achievement

_____28. I compete to make good grades
_____29. I make good grades with good teachers
_____30. I make good grades with bad teachers
_____31. I am aware of my schools strong academic history
_____32. I am aware of my schools achievements in sports

School Climate

_____33. My school is very supportive
_____34. The mood at my school is encouraging
_____35. My school makes you feel like a winner
_____36. My school expects students to uphold a legacy of winning in sports
_____37. My school expects students to keep the classroom environment safe
_____38. My school expects students to uphold a legacy of winning in academics
_____39. My school expects students to keep the school environment safe

Teacher Student Relationship

_____40. The teachers and students get along at my school
_____41. I feel important to my teacher(s)
_____42. My Teachers are concerned about my academics
_____43. My Teachers encourage me to uphold our schools academic legacy

Parent Student Relationship

_____44. I feel supported by my parent(s)
_____45. The parents and students get along good at my school
_____46. My parent(s) are concerned about my grades
_____47. My Parents expect me to uphold our school's academic legacy

Appendix C (continued)

Peer Student Relationship

_____48. I feel accepted by my peer(s)
_____49. My peer(s) are concerned about my grades
_____50. The students are good together at my school
_____51. My peer(s) expect me to uphold our school's academic legacy

Instructional Delivery

_____52. I want my teacher to use more technology when teaching.
_____53. I enjoy using technology in class to learn new things.
_____54. I prefer using my laptop, ipad, iphone and other technology to learn in class
_____55. I feel stimulated when using technology in class for instruction
_____56. My teachers have positive attitudes about using technology to teach with.
_____57. My teachers are comfortable using technology to teach with.

Comments:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Thank you for your cooperation_____ ***The End***

APPENDIX D

SPSS Program and Data File

```
TITLE 'KEY INFLUENCERS ON STUDENT MOTIVATION IN MIDDLE
SCHOOLS'.

SUBTITLE 'Ronnie Jackson Dissertation - 2013'.

DATA LIST FIXED/
ID 1-3
GENDER 4
ETHIC 5
AGEGRP 6
GRADE 7
READ 8
ENGLISH 9
MATH 10
SPORTS 11
SPLIKE 12
CLUBS 13
CLLIKE 14
FATHER 15
MOTHER 16
FAEMPLOY 17
MOEMPLOY 18
SCHOOL 19
CLASS 20
TARDY 21
ABSENT 22
ONGOOD 23
CORDIAL 24
BEHAVE 25
INALL 26
ATTENT 27
PARTIC 28
IWORK 29
EXTRA 30
COMPETE 31
WITHGOOD 32
```

WITHDAD 33
HISTORY 34
AMAWARE 35
SUPPORT 36
MOOD 37
WINNER 38
LEGACY 39
SAFE 40
WINNING 41
ENVIRON 42
GETALONG 43
IMPORT 44
MCONCERN 45
UPHOLD 46
PARENT 47
GETALON 48
ABOUTMY 49
PUPHOLD 50
PEERS 51
CONCERN 52
AREGOOD 53
MEUPHOLD 54
TECHNO 55
ENJOY 56
LAPTOP 57
IFEEL 58
POSITIVE 59
COMFORT 60.

VARIABLE LABELS
ID 'Questionnaire Number'
GENDER 'Q1 My Gender'
ETHIC 'Q2 Ethnicity'
AGEGRP 'Q3 My age'
GRADE 'Q4 My school grade'
READ 'Q5 My score on the Georgia CRCT Reading test in the 7th grade'
ENGLISH 'Q6 My score on the Georgia CRCT English language test in the 7th grade'
MATH 'Q7 My score on the Georgia CRCT Math test in the 7th grade'
SPORTS 'Q8 I participate in school-sponsored sports'
SPLIKE 'Q9 I would like to participate in school-sponsored sports'
CLUBS 'Q10 I participate in school-sponsored clubs'
CLLIKE 'Q11 I would like to participate in school-sponsored clubs'
FATHER 'Q12 What is the highest level of education your father completed'
MOTHER 'Q13 What is the highest level of education your mother completed'

FAEMPLOY 'Q14 What is your fathers current employment status'
MOEMPLOY 'Q15 What is your mothers current employment status'
SCHOOL 'Q16 I attend school regularly'
CLASS 'Q17 I attend all of my classes regularly'
TARDY 'Q18 I am tardy to school regularly'
ABSENT 'Q19 I am absent from class regularly'
ONGOOD 'Q20 Being on good behavior helps me at school'
CORDIAL 'Q21 Being cordial towards teachers helps me at school'
BEHAVE 'Q22 I have good behavior at school'
INALL 'Q23 I have good behavior in all of my classes'
ATTENT 'Q24 I pay attention in my classes'
PARTIC 'Q25 I participate in my classes'
IWORK 'Q26 I work hard to achieve in class'
EXTRA 'Q27 I participate in extra curricular activities'
COMPETE 'Q28 I compete to make good grades'
WITHGOOD 'Q29 I make good grades with good teachers'
WITHDAD 'Q30 I make good grades with bad teachers'
HISTORY 'Q31 I am aware of my schools strong academic history'
AMAWARE 'Q32 I am aware of my schools achievements in sports'
SUPPORT 'Q33 My school is very supportive'
MOOD 'Q34 The mood at my school is encouraging'
WINNER 'Q35 My school makes you feel like a winner'
LEGACY 'Q36 My school expects students to uphold a legacy of winning in sports'
SAFE 'Q37 My school expects students to keep the classroom environment safe'
WINNING 'Q38 My school expects to uphold a legacy of winning in academics'
ENVIRON 'Q39 My school expects students to keep the school environment safe'
GETALONG 'Q40 The teachers and students get along at my school'
IMPORT 'Q41 I feel important to my teachers'
MCONCERN 'Q42 My teachers are concerned about by academics'
UPHOLD 'Q43 My teachers encourage me to uphold our schools academic legacy'
PARENT 'Q44 I feel supported by my parents'
GETALON 'Q45 The parents and students get along good at my school'
ABOUTMY 'Q46 My parents are concerned about my grades'
PUPHOLD 'Q47 My parents expect me to uphold our schools academic legacy'
PEERS 'Q48 I feel accepted by my peers'
CONCERN 'Q49 My peers are concerned about my grades'
AREGOOD 'Q50 The students are good together at my school'
MEUPHOLD 'Q51 My peers expect me to uphold our schools academic legacy'
TECHNO 'Q52 I want my teacher to use more technology when teaching'
ENJOY 'Q53 I enjoy technology in class to learn new things'
LAPTOP 'Q54 I prefer using my laptop ipad iphone and other technology to learn in class'
IFEEL 'Q55 I feel stimulated when using technology in class for instruction'

POSITIVE 'Q56 My teachers have positive attitudes about using technology to teach with'
COMFORT 'Q57 My teachers are comfortable using technology to teach with'.

VALUE LABELS
GENDER
1 'Male'
2 'Female'/
ETHIC
1 'Black'
2 'White'
3 'Latino'
4 'Asian'
5 'AmerIndian'
6 'Other'/
AGEGRP
1 '12yrs'
2 '13yrs'
3 '14yrs'
4 '15 yrs'/
GRADE
1 '6th'
2 '7th'
3 '8th'/
READ
1 'Does not meet'
2 'Meets'
3 'Exceeds'
4 'Non Applicable'/
ENGLISH
1 'Does not meet'
2 'Meets'
3 'Exceeds'
4 'Non Applicable'/
MATH
1 'Does not meet'
2 'Meets'
3 'Exceeds'
4 'Non Applicable'/
SPORTS
1 'No'
2 'Yes'/
SPLIKE
1 'No'

```
 2 'Yes'/
CLUBS
 1 'No'
 2 'Yes'/
CLLIKE
 1 'No'
 2 'Yes'/
FATHER
 1 'Elementary 1-5'
2 'Middle 6-8'
3 'Some High School 9-11'
4 'High School Grad/GED'
5 'Technical School'
6 'Some College'
7 'College Graduate'
 8 'Do not Know'/
MOTHER
 1 'Elementary 1-5'
2 'Middle 6-8'
3 'Some High School 9-11'
4 'High School Grad/GED'
5 'Technical School'
6 'Some College'
7 'College Graduate'
 8 'Do not Know'/
FAEMPLOY
1 'Business Owner'
2 'Employed'
3 'Unemployed'
4 'Retired'
5 'On Disability'
 6 'Do not Know'/
MOEMPLOY
1 'Business Owner'
2 'Employed'
3 'Unemployed'
4 'Retired'
5 'On Disability'
 6 'Do not Know'/
SCHOOL
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
 4 'Strongly Agree'/
```

CLASS
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
4 'Strongly Agree'/
TARDY
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
4 'Strongly Agree'/
ABSENT
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
4 'Strongly Agree'/
ONGOOD
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
4 'Strongly Agree'/
CORDIAL
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
4 'Strongly Agree'/
BEHAVE
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2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
4 'Strongly Agree'/
INALL
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
4 'Strongly Agree'/
ATTENT
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
4 'Strongly Agree'/
PARTIC
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'

4 'Strongly Agree'/
IWORK
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
4 'Strongly Agree'/
EXTRA
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
4 'Strongly Agree'/
COMPETE
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
4 'Strongly Agree'/
WITHGOOD
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
4 'Strongly Agree'/
WITHDAD
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
4 'Strongly Agree'/
HISTORY
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
4 'Strongly Agree'/
AMAWARE
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
4 'Strongly Agree'/
SUPPORT
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
4 'Strongly Agree'/
MOOD
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'

3 'Agree'
 4 'Strongly Agree'/
WINNER
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
 4 'Strongly Agree'/
LEGACY
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
 4 'Strongly Agree'/
SAFE
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
 4 'Strongly Agree'/
WINNING
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
 4 'Strongly Agree'/
ENVIRON
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
 4 'Strongly Agree'/
GETALONG
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
 4 'Strongly Agree'/
IMPORT
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
 4 'Strongly Agree'/
MCONCERN
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
 4 'Strongly Agree'/
UPHOLD
1 'Strongly Disagree'

2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
 4 'Strongly Agree'/
PARENT
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
 4 'Strongly Agree'/
GETALON
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
 4 'Strongly Agree'/
ABOUTMY
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
 4 'Strongly Agree'/
PUPHOLD
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
 4 'Strongly Agree'/
PEERS
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
 4 'Strongly Agree'/
CONCERN
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
 4 'Strongly Agree'/
AREGOOD
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
 4 'Strongly Agree'/
MEUPHOLD
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
 4 'Strongly Agree'/
TECHNO

```
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
 4 'Strongly Agree'/
ENJOY
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
 4 'Strongly Agree'/
LAPTOP
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
 4 'Strongly Agree'/
IFEEL
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
 4 'Strongly Agree'/
POSITIVE
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
 4 'Strongly Agree'/
COMFORT
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
4 'Strongly Agree'/.

MISSING VALUES
GENDER ETHIC AGEGRP GRADE READ ENGLISH MATH SPORTS SPLIKE
CLUBS CLLIKE FATHER MOTHER
FAEMPLOY MOEMPLOY SCHOOL CLASS TARDY ABSENT ONGOOD
CORDIAL BEHAVE INALL ATTENT PARTIC
IWORK EXTRA COMPETE WITHGOOD WITHDAD HISTORY AMAWARE
SUPPORT MOOD WINNER LEGACY SAFE
WINNING ENVIRON GETALONG IMPORT MCONCERN UPHOLD PARENT
GETALON ABOUTMY PUPHOLD PEERS
CONCERN AREGOOD MEUPHOLD TECHNO ENJOY LAPTOP IFEEL POSITIVE
COMFORT (0).
```

BEGIN DATA
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